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School Culture: Perspectives of Urban Small School Leaders in the Cleveland Municipal School District

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Seton Hall University

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**SCHOOL CULTURE: PERSPECTIVES OF URBAN SMALL SCHOOL LEADERS IN
THE CLEVELAND MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

BY

OCTAVIA ANNE REID

Dissertation Committee

**Anthony Colella, Ph.D., Mentor
Barbara Strobert, Ph.D.
Robert Moore, Ph.D.
Theresa Yeldell, Ed.D.**

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Education
Seton Hall University**

2007

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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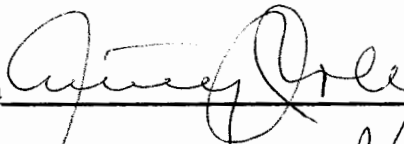
Doctoral Candidate, **Octavia Reid**, has successfully defended and made the required modifications to the text of the doctoral dissertation for the **Ed.D.** during this **Spring Semester 2007**.

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

(please sign and date beside your name)

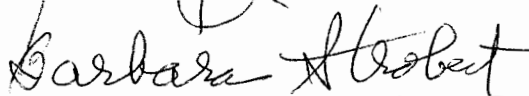
Mentor:

Dr. Anthony Colella



Committee Member:

Dr. Barbara Strobert



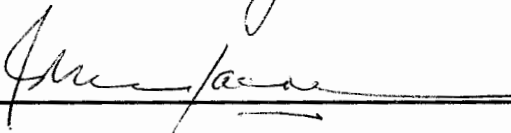
Committee Member:

Dr. Theresa Yeldell



Committee Member:

Dr. Robert Moore



External Reader:

Associate Dean:

The mentor and any other committee members who wish to review revisions will sign and date this document only when revisions have been completed. Please return this form to the Office of Graduate Studies, where it will be placed in the candidate's file.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The American High School

In 1957, the Sputnik space satellite pushed Americans towards the concept that high schools needed to be bigger both in size and population to produce more scientists to compete with Russia. The notion was quantity equates quality, bigger, better and more powerful. The move towards larger schools has continued on through most of the 20th century. This trend was validated in 1959, when Harvard University President James B. Conant and other nationally recognized education leaders began to advocate for the creation of consolidated, comprehensive high schools. The selling point, they believed, was that they could offer students a wider variety of academic and vocational courses in a more efficient and cost effective manner with less strain on community resources (Capps & Maxwell, 1999). Researchers have concluded that the varied curriculum in large high schools is often associated with reduced learning, and learning that is more strongly related to students' race and social class (Gamoran, 1987; Lee & Bryk 1989; Lee, Burkam, Smerdon, Chow-Hoy, & Gevert, 1997; Oakes, 1987). Lee and Smith (1997) found that the savings projected by proponents of school consolidation have not materialized, instead of long-assumed economies of scale, they discovered diseconomies, or penalties, of scale. Large schools need more layers of support and administrative staff to handle the increased bureaucratic demands.

In retrospect, Conant (1959) suggested an enrollment of just 400 students as being sufficient for the delivery of a comprehensive high school curriculum. He did not foresee

that his advocacy of the comprehensive high school would be used to justify creating enormous schools. Today, 50 % of U.S. secondary schools enroll more than 1,500 students (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Columbine High School, the site of the Littleton massacre, has nearly 2,000 students. The largest high school in the country John F. Kennedy High School in the Bronx has 5,300 students (Capps & Maxwell, 1999).

Schoggen and Schoggen (1998) stated that this push for school and district consolidation continues into the present. This would conclude that large schools serve the needs of youth and provide them with the necessary skills to compete in the global marketplace of the 21st century.

According to the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP, 2005) there have been many reports on the problems with the achievement levels of U.S. high school students as compared to international students. There is also a significant achievement gap along race and income lines as well as low graduation and college attendance rates for low-income and minority students. The vast majority of high schools, to a great degree, have a climate of anonymity where little focus is placed on identifying the personal learning needs of individual students and using such information to foster improved teaching and learning.

The National Commission on Excellence in Education reported that public high schools stratify students' social and academic experiences, promote social environments in which students are not known well by their teachers, and foster low levels of student engagement and achievement. Students of color and poverty are especially hurt by the failures of the education system. Latino students are the most likely to drop out of school, with only two-thirds earning diplomas and GEDs. In reading and mathematics

many African American and Latino students graduate from high school with skills at the middle-school level (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). Lee and Smith (1997) reported that large schools were found to impact low socioeconomic status (SES) students more negatively than any other groups.

The Problem

The schools-within-schools in the Cleveland Municipal School District were implemented over the span of one school year. Intensive training was given to school leaders concerning the aspects of small schools and relationship building. The following school year, comprehensive high schools were down-sized into schools-within-schools. Teachers were not trained along side administration, nor were they apart of the grass root efforts of the reform. Parent involvement was non-existent, which is a critical element in developing the “community” aspect of small schools. The organization and structure of this reform, and the way in which it would impact teachers, was not addressed, nor re-negotiated in the teachers’ contract.

According to the 2005-2006 School Report Card generated by the Ohio Department of Education, the schools-within-schools in the Cleveland Municipal School District are failing. The schools have received the lowest academic standing in the state: academic emergency. The schools have also shown a decline in attendance and graduation rates.

Since 2002, the violence in Cleveland’s high schools has more than doubled. The number of teacher assaults reached an all-time high during the 2004-2005 academic school years. The Cleveland police have reported a steady stream of violence among youth since January 2005. Police and school officials have given several possible reasons for the escalated reports of violence: an expanded police presence and more

comprehensive reporting of incidents, neighborhood violence spilling into the schools and the conversion of large high schools into clusters of smaller ones (Cleveland Catalyst, 2005).

In May 1999, following the Columbine High School Massacre, Vice President Al Gore criticized the practice of sending students into overcrowded, factory-style high schools. Secretary of Education, Richard Riley convened a panel of school security experts; their top recommendation did not include gun control, metal detectors, or more police presence. Instead, they encouraged officials to reduce the size of the nation's high schools, because small schools are a powerful antidote to the sense of alienation that can lead to violence (Riley, 1999).

Klonsky (1995), Raywid (1995), and others reported that large high school size impairs attendance and dampens enthusiasm for involvement in school activities. Large high schools have lower grade point averages and standardized test scores coupled with higher dropout rates and more problems with violence, security, and drug abuse.

Students need to develop interpersonal relationships with the adults in their school environment. They need to have a personal attachment to the school and feel that they are cared for as an individual and not lost in a sea of faces. Sergiovanni (1996) recommends that high schools be thought of as communities where teachers and staff develop relationships that enable them to really get to know each other. Students and teachers feel safe in such schools and rigorous meaningful learning can occur. According to Kathleen Cotton (1996a), Wayid stated that education is founded on the development of the individual; the size of the building should be small enough to allow the individual to count.

This research assessed the culture of schools-within-schools in an urban school district. Each building houses three or four independent academies or curriculum (theme) based schools that have been established since the Fall of 2002. Each school has an enrollment of 350-400 African American students. The schools are managed independently and under total control of the small school leader. The schools-within- schools model is the latest reform effort to fix the ailing large comprehensive high school through downsizing.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the perceptions of 10 small school leaders and 3 campus administrators concerning the culture in an urban schools-within-schools environment. This study examined school climate with a focus on the patterns of attendance and discipline. The other key variables investigated were teacher-student relationships and student achievement. The increased outbreaks of violence, dismal academic standing, and the financial outlay supporting this reform prompted this researcher to conduct this study.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does the culture of schools-within-schools encourage the interpersonal relationships with adults that students need for success?
2. To what extent does the culture of schools-within-schools prevent violence and crime?
3. To what extent does the culture of schools-within-schools foster students in reaching high academic standards?
4. To what extent does the culture of schools-within-schools reduce absenteeism by both students and teachers?

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited in terms of its scope and research design. It is assumed that the schools-within-schools have programs that have been fully implemented including all organizational and structural changes and that the small school leaders are in total control of their schools, having complete autonomy. It is also assumed that the responses given are honest and a true reflection of the schools-within-schools environment. The results were limited to professionals in an urban district in Cleveland, Ohio; leading schools-within schools for a minimum of 3 years. The research was restricted by the administrators' perceptions of school culture and the interpretation of data by a single researcher.

Significance of the Study

This study was significant for high school administrators, curriculum coordinators, guidance personnel, reform leaders, policymakers and teachers. School boards, the business community, parents, and all those who have a stake in urban students, their learning environment, and their safety will find this study of particular interest. This study will provide new information on the schools-within-schools (SWS) reform model.

This study was significant in that it represents a body of research completed in a qualitative manner from the perspective of urban small school leaders. The small school leaders are not all housed in the same building, so there is a multi-site perspective on culture that allows for comparison between the buildings as well as established patterns or norms that validate research findings. This study provides information on SWS in an urban district that serves a total population of African American students in the poorest

city in America (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). Howley (1996) reported that small schools clearly provide an achievement advantage for impoverished students.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of clarity, the following definitions are provided to ensure uniformity and understanding of these terms throughout the study.

Large high school: a high school of Grades 9-12, with more than 500 students (Bank Street College of Education, 2000).

School climate: the social atmosphere of a setting or “learning environment” in which students have different experiences, depending upon protocols set up by teachers and administrators (Moss, 1979).

School culture: is the underground stream of norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals that build up over time as people work together, solve problems, and confront challenges (Deal & Peterson, 1990).

Schools-within-Schools (SWS): is a small, autonomous program housed within a larger school building. They are generally responsible to the district rather than to the host school’s principal and are formally authorized by the superintendent or board of education. These schools have their own culture, program, personnel, students, budget, and school space (negotiating the use of common space with the host school) (U.S. Department of Education, 2001).

Small school: a high school of Grades 9-12, with no more than 500 students (Bank Street College of Education, 2000).

Social environment: (a) relationship, which includes involvement, affiliation with others in the classroom, and teacher support; (b) personal growth or goal orientation includes the

personal development and self-enhancement of all members of the environment and; (c) system maintenance/system change includes the orderliness of the environment, the clarity of the rules, and the strictness of the teachers in enforcing the rules (Moss, 1979).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELEVANT RESEARCH AND LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter represents a review of the literature and research relevant to the topic of this study. It will be presented in the following sections. First, a background will be given to the small schools movement concentrating on the schools-within-schools reform model. The second section will explore the concept of small school culture including the enriched climate that is fostered in a small school environment. The third section will examine the academic achievements of students in a small school culture, particularly minority children. The next section reveals the positive teacher-student relationships exhibited in a small school culture. This is followed by an examination of the attendance and discipline factors in a small school culture. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Schools-within-Schools Reform

The failure of the large comprehensive high school led John Goodlad (1984) to declare that he “would not want to face the challenge of justifying a senior high school of more than 500 to 600 students” (p. 310). In terms of size, there is an overwhelming amount of research that suggests students enrolled in small schools learn more or equal to their counterparts in large schools. Lee and Smith 1997 suggest students learn more, and the learning is more equitable in medium-sized high schools enrolling between 600 and 900 students. In the 1996 *Breaking Ranks* report published jointly by the Carnegie Foundation and the National Association of Secondary Principals, it was stated that: “schools must break into units of no more than 600 students so that teachers and students can get to know each other” (NASSP, 1996, p. 5). Vander Ark (2002) found that high

schools with no more than 100 students per grade level created learning environments that lead to success. Cotton (1996a), after a review of 69 key studies of school size, concluded that an extensive and consistent research base indicates the appropriate school size for a high school is 400 to 800 students. Over 40 years ago, Barker and Gump (1964) suggested a “campus model” for high schools wherein:

...students are grouped in semiautonomous units for most of their studies, but are usually provided a school-wide extracurricular program. The campus school provides for repeated contacts between the same teachers and students; this continuity of associates probably leads to closer social bonds. A common sense theory is that campus school welds together the facility advantages of the large school and the social values of the small school. (pp. 201-202)

In many urban districts, the answer to providing students with the benefits of small school environments at minimal cost was to downsize existing large high schools into several smaller schools that occupy the same building. This restructuring, referred to as “schools-within-schools, (SWS)” is designed to eliminate the social and academic shortcomings found in large urban high schools. The underlying principle to the SWS structure is that by dividing into smaller units, large high schools can mimic the interpersonal relationships typically found in small school environments. A tremendous benefit from the interpersonal relationships between teachers and students would be enhanced student engagement, which would ultimately result in higher student achievement. Although this cause and effect has little empirical evidence to prove its validity, the Coalition of Essential Schools concluded that the SWS structure is divisive and likely to introduce contention (Muncey & McQuillan, 1991). A more recent study found that smaller settings had no significant academic advantage for urban and minority

students (Viadero, 2006); it continually receives increased interest as the urban reform formula for success.

National Interest and Financial Support

In 2001, the U.S. Department of Education created the Smaller Learning Communities Grants Program for high schools interested in dividing themselves into smaller organizational units and allocated \$42.3 million towards that aim (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Through the No Child Left Behind Act (2002), the government strengthened its position to help school districts plan, implement, or expand small learning communities in large public high schools with an appropriation of \$142 million. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has awarded over a billion dollars to high schools seeking to transform into smaller more personalized learning environments (Gates Foundation, 2005). The Knowledge Works Foundation of Ohio was awarded a \$50 million grant to fund the Ohio High School Transformation Initiative. This program was designed to create small autonomous learning environments of no more than 100 students per grade level at 15 large underperforming urban high schools across the state (Gates Foundation, 2003). The Annenberg and Carnegie Foundations and the Pew Charitable Trusts have given substantial resources to schools-within-schools, especially in New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago. New York City's Small Schools Network, the Small Schools Workshop based at the University of Illinois in Chicago, and the Coalition of Essential Schools are effective small school initiatives (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). The majority of the financial support towards this initiative of downsizing large high schools has been to the benefit of schools serving children in high poverty urban areas.

Schools-Within-Schools Structures

Mary Anne Raywid (1995) defines a school-within-a-school as a separate and autonomous unit formally authorized by the board of education and/or superintendent. It plans and runs its own staff and students and receives its own separate budget. Although it must negotiate the use of common space (gym, auditorium, playground) with a host school, and defer to the building principal on matters of safety and building operation, the school-within-a-school reports to a district official instead of being responsible to the building principal. Both its teachers and students are affiliated with the school-within-a-school as a matter of choice (p. 21).

Academies are subgroups within schools, organized around particular themes. Career academies utilize the school-to-career movement integrating academic and vocational instruction, providing work-based learning opportunities. Teachers and students integrate academic and occupation-related classes as a way to maintain academic standards through real-world experiences (U. S. Department of Education, 2001).

House plans divide students into groups of several hundred, either across grade levels or by grade levels. House plans personalize the high school experience but have little or no effect on curriculum or instruction. Each house has its own discipline plan, student government, social activities, and extracurricular activities, although students may participate in activities of the larger school (U.S. Department of Education, 2001).

Challenges of SWS

Despite the success associated with small schools and the SWS being a cost-effective and logical means of downsizing large high schools the structure does present some disadvantages. Raywid (1995) found a lack of commitment to the small school

concept, either in design or implementation, lack of autonomy and separateness of the subunit or sub-school, and failure to align cultural and structural changes as the factors that are most present when a SWS does not yield small school benefits. SWS can cause conflict in preexisting relationships and can cause unhealthy competition between staff due to the shared resources of the larger school. Critics maintain that subschool grouping is just another form of tracking, promoting inequality, while eliminating school coherence and the role of the principal (Deweese, 1999; McMullan, Sipe & Wolfe, 1994; Muncey & McQuillan, 1991; Raywid, 1996).

Small School Culture

John Goodlad (1975) defines culture as the interactions of the students, the teachers, and the principal of a school. The interactions of these people, the language they use, the traditions they uphold, the beliefs to which they subscribe, and so forth, make up the culture of a school. Deal and Peterson (1990) refer to school culture as the underground stream of norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals that build up over time as people work together, solve problems, and confront challenges. According to Bolman and Deal (2003), Schein defined culture as a pattern of basic assumptions that a group learns as it solves its problems of external adaptation and integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. Deal and Kennedy (1982) defined culture as the way we do things around here. Culture is both a product and a process that embodies accumulated wisdom from those who came before us and is constantly renewed and re-created as newcomers learn the old ways and become teachers themselves. School culture defines normalcy for all its members.

The school culture consists of a dominant culture and subcultures of various groups. The student culture is a notable subculture. In the recent age of the Hip-Hop culture, student patterns of dress, speech habits, and street rituals are becoming more dominant in school culture. The destructive values glorified in this culture and the focus on group dynamics negatively affects the relationships that students have with adults of the dominant culture. This breakdown in norms causes alienation and power struggles that ultimately lead to negative incidents amongst students and staff. Patterson, Purkey, and Parker (1986) recommend careful attention to the peer culture of students, especially in secondary schools. The student peer culture influences student performance and staff members must know whether the dominant peer culture adds or detracts from the mission of the school. It is the responsibility of the adults to help students internalize the elements of school culture that lead to student success.

Schein (1985) explains that “every organization is concerned about the degree to which people at all levels ‘fit’ into it” (p. 42). Small schools embrace this ideology by developing a community of learners interacting on a unique and personal level. This community is often referred to as “family.” The shared ideas and values that are modeled constitute community (Sergiovanni, 1996). The community developed within this culture defines the acceptable behaviors and or expressed ideas that its members display in the school and external community. Due to their small number, small schools are to exhibit a culture that can be felt and seen by outsiders. The interpersonal relationships that are observed in small schools are a testament of an internalized set of norms, values, customs, and rituals.

The vision of small schools is illuminated through its culture. The vision of a school defines for its members and the outside community its beliefs about teaching and learning and the expectant outcome. According to Aness (1998), the vision is the architecture of ideas that guides the design and development of the school. It speaks of the culture, the values, and what the school believes to be important. The vision states how these values and beliefs will be enacted. It lets the outside world know what the vision of the school is. The vision communicates the culture.

School Climate

Small schools are an example of schools that have an “open climate” (Hoy & Sabo, 1998). All members of the organization are expected to behave according to established, fairly executed rules of conduct. An open climate is able to foster interpersonal relationships while simultaneously moving the organization towards its mission. The interpersonal relationships are developed effortlessly among administrators, teachers and students. These relationships enhance students’ self-perceptions, both socially and academically. NASSP (2005b) cites that creating a supportive environment that cultivates a student’s sense of belonging, ownership of learning, and recognition of and ability to make good choices is crucial to the learning experience. The basic characteristic of an open climate is the “authenticity” of behavior that occurs throughout the entire organization. They are healthy schools. Hoy and Sabo (1998) cite that a healthy school is one where participants want to be rather than are forced to be. The climate of a small school can best be described as a close knit family that values the individual and nurtures the student. Teachers know students by name and have a vested interest in their welfare. Students are less likely to fall through the cracks.

According to Sizer (1985), a high school teacher should have a direct responsibility for fewer than 100 students, preferably fewer than 80. The “smallness” encourages a positive attitude towards the school; there is a greater sense of belonging. Gottfredson (1985) stated that students in smaller schools fight less, feel safer, come to school more frequently, and report being more attached to their school. According to Bank Street College of Education (2000), Pelzel indicates that the small school provides an atmosphere that places significant value on each student involved in the school. Effective schools research identifies a school climate that is safe, orderly, serious, and attractive as high on their list of best practices.

There is a substantial amount of evidence that supports the fact that less violence occurs in small schools (Bank Street College of Education, 2000; Gottfredson, 1985; Stockard & Mayberry, 1992). Students in small schools feel more comfortable and safe. They are less likely to engage in violent, physical altercations with other students. The students instead are engaged in work that has intrinsic interest and importance. They are unable to hide and go unnoticed when every student is connected to at least one adult who shares the responsibility of helping that student navigate the system and prepare for further learning. These are democratic schools where small groups of faculty members make important decisions about every aspect of the students’ school experience. These teachers ensure they all create evocative and active learning experiences that help students grow personally, emotionally, and intellectually. It is in large schools, where alienation often goes hand in hand with anonymity that danger comes, cite Raywid & Oshiyama (2000).

Maeroff (1998) concluded that students in large schools come to school lacking a sense of connectedness, and students feel alienated and do not have a sense of belonging to their community, neighborhood, or school. This alienation does not occur in small schools. According to Schoggen and Schoggen's (1998) behavior theory, students in small schools are more important to the operation of the setting. When people are in short supply, the absence of a member has a serious impact on the environment running smoothly. This smallness makes it almost impossible for a student to not feel connected. As cited in Cotton (1996b), Galletti states that this sense of belonging has been shown to reduce or eliminate students' sense of alienation that is found in larger schools, and consequently positively affects confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of responsibility for self-direction. The small number of students means everyone must participate in school activities and take an active role in the daily functions of school. According to Cotton (1996a), "In a small school you can be somebody," to be known and acknowledged is essential to the psychological well-being of humans and learning (p. 9).

According to Clinchy (2000), students succeed in a school climate that has high standards, is small enough that teachers and students know each other well, that has authority and resources for teaching and learning, and that is accountable for results. There is significant value placed on the individual needs of each student. Wehlage (1986) states that the single most important characteristic of a program is its ability to support a "family atmosphere" that provides a positive and constructive atmosphere.

Academic Success of Students

Students perform better in small school environments (Cotton, 1996a). They have personal relationships with adults, who are concerned about their welfare in and out of

school. These relationships help develop a stronger sense of community, that yields high standards, individualized instruction, and fewer disruptions in the classroom environment. The respect for academic achievement and the commitment to reach higher is expressed by all members of the school community. In small schools, teachers collaborate more openly with one another and are treated as inventors, thinkers, and doers of the curriculum (Bank Street College of Education, 2000).

Raywid (1995) stated that the research on the positive effects of small schools has clarity and a level of confidence rarely found in the annals of educational research. Students' academic achievement in smaller schools is equal to or higher than their achievement in larger schools. The findings on academic achievement are equally divided; approximately half of the studies show that students do equally as well in small schools as in larger ones, while the other half finds students in small schools do better on measures such as school grades, test scores, honor roll membership, subject-area achievement, and higher order thinking skills assessments (Cotton, 1996a).

According to the study conducted by the Bank Street College of Education (2000), the relationship between school size and student achievement suggests that students' attachment, persistence and performance are all stronger in small schools. In Cotton's (2000) examination of more than 100 studies and evaluations, she concluded that academic achievement in small schools was at least equal, and often superior, to that of large schools. Sergiovanni (1996), states that in small schools, principals are able to emerge as the instructional leader. Raywid (1996) also cites that principals in small schools spend more time in classrooms helping teachers, thus strengthening the school community.

According to Kathleen Cotton (1996b), Klonsky cites small schools help close the achievement gap between students from higher income, mostly White and Asian families and students from lower income, mostly African American and Hispanic families. For ethnic minority students and students of low socioeconomic status, the effects of small schools are especially positive, helping reduce the damaging effects of poverty on student achievement. Walberg and Fowler (1991) agree that socioeconomic status (SES) is one of the major influences on achievement. Howley (1994), states that smaller schools maximize achievement in impoverished communities, whereas larger schools maximize achievement in affluent communities. Lee and Smith (1997) concluded that the strongest influences of school size on achievement equity were realized in the smallest school size category, 300 or fewer students.

Lee, V.E., Smith, J.B., & Croninger, R.G. (1995) found three components common in small schools that meet the challenge of motivating students to reach for higher academic standards successfully:

1. Student achievement is found strong; course offerings are narrow and academic Content is strong.
2. Curriculums center on the notion that all students will meet high academic standards and devote considerable effort to academic endeavors.
2. Students are engaged in sustained, disciplined, and critical thought through a variety of instructional approaches, such as independent study, project-based learning, and real-world problem solving.

Relationship of Student and Teacher

In a study conducted by Macroff (1998), “Making Life Better for Children in Need”, it was found that small schools, in which adults give more attention to each student, can help to address the fact that so many students come to school lacking in “social capital.” The study describes a lack of social capital when students arrive without academic initiative. Students lack a good school work ethic, study habits, and self-discipline. Students come to school without a sense of knowing. They do not have adequate background knowledge to build upon. Many students also come to school without a sense of connectedness. The school is just a temporary fixture it has no relevance in their lives. This describes the plight of a great number of minority children in urban ghettos, but according to Fine and Somerville (1998), in small schools, students are not just faceless names in an attendance book, their personalities, styles of learning, strengths and needs are known by their teachers. They can develop social capital. Teachers in small schools are usually there by choice, so they have a strong, even intense, level of commitment.

According to Love and Kruger (2005), “Successful teachers of African American children create a community of learners much like an extended family, perceive teaching as part of their calling, and have high expectations for the success of all students.” According to Bryk and Driscoll (1998), individuals in small schools are involved with one another not merely due to engagement on the same task, but because they have a social connection. This connection allows students to see that teachers have a genuine concern for them as people, and this develops social cohesion that results in high academic achievement.

In a study on small schools by Bank Street College of Education (2000), teachers know their students well. In today's troubled society, it is imperative for teachers to know students' family backgrounds and personalities, as well as their academic strengths and weaknesses. The relationships developed between teachers and students most often extend beyond the school year. Staff members in small schools interact informally with students, giving them the freedom to access information from a large pool of adults. Evidence for the self-fulfilling prophesy is strongly observed in small school environments; teachers have high expectations and students, in turn, try their best to please their teachers and reach their expectations. According to Aness (1998), students in small schools are well known by the adults in their environment, which leads to more individualized instruction. Littky and Allen (1999) agree that relationships are fundamental to customized learning plans and the interaction between adults and students transforms students and makes the learning more personal.

Relationship building is fundamental to the academic success of students in small schools. The social connection that occurs between students and the adults in the small school community cultivates an environment that produces higher order thinking skills. Teachers know students personally, and this aids in curriculum being tailored for an individual, thus ensuring that each student develops his or her full potential.

Attendance

Every day hundreds and thousands of students are absent from school. Large high schools are breeding grounds for chronic absenteeism. A national review of discipline issues conducted in 1996-1997 found that principals identified student absenteeism as one of the top problems in their schools (Heaviside, 1998). Students who do not attend

school regularly fall behind their peers and oftentimes dropout of school. According to DeKalb (1999), students often cite boredom and loss of interest in school, irrelevant courses, suspensions, and bad relationships with teachers, poor academics, social isolation, and friends not attending school as the reasons for their non-attendance.

A replication of the research done by Barker and Gump (1964) and Gump (1978) by Lindsay (1984), studied the affects of high school size. Lindsay found student satisfaction and attendance are higher at small schools. In fact small schools were three to four times more likely to have attendance rates over 95%. This is a very important factor, since there is strong evidence to support the relationship between time in school and academic achievement. Qualitative studies have shown that the positive relationships in small schools create an atmosphere where students want to be and on a regular basis. According to Jordon and McPartland (2001), students who have positive relationships with the adults in their schools and feel they are personally expected to come to school every day, will attend on a regular basis. Bryk and Driscoll (1998) found that schools organized as communities have lower absenteeism rates among their students. Bank Street College of Education (2000) documented those students attending small schools attending 4 to 5 more days of school during a semester than their counterparts in larger schools.

Summary

This chapter began with an introduction that led to a background of the small schools movement concentrating on the schools-within-schools reform model. The second section explored the concept of small school culture including the enriched climate that is fostered in a small school environment. The third section examined the

academic achievements of students in a small school culture, particularly minority children. The next section revealed the positive teacher-student relationships exhibited in a small school culture. This was followed by an examination of the attendance and discipline factors in a small school culture.

The research indicates that students enrolled in small schools perform better academically due to the culture of the small school environment. The culture is one of high expectations and individualized instruction. The social connection that students have with adults is the foundation that paves the way for higher achievement. The family atmosphere creates a community of learners focused towards a common goal, and each member of the family is valued and appreciated for their work towards the school's vision.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to assess the perceptions of small school leaders in the Cleveland Municipal School District, concerning the culture in an urban schools-within-schools environment. This study will also examine the areas of school climate, teacher-student relationships, student achievement, discipline, and attendance. Chapter 3 contains information on the population, research procedures, interview questions, data analysis, and summary.

Population

The population for this study is comprised of the building administrators located in the downsized high schools in the Cleveland Municipal School District that have been in existence for at least 3 or more years and serve students of a similar background (SES and ethnicity). There are three downsized high schools in the district that meet the requirements for this study. Two of the schools-within-schools are led by three small school leaders and a campus administrator. One school is led by four small school leaders and a campus administrator. Based on the conditions set for this study, and approval from the Chief Academic Officer, 13 small school leaders have been chosen to participate in the study on school culture. Therefore, the sample size ($N=13$) is 100% of the total eligible population. Due to reorganization in the district, two small school leaders were dropped from this study, therefore reducing the sample size ($N=11$) which is 100% of the total eligible population.

Research Procedure and Techniques for Data Collection

This study was designed using a qualitative research approach. According to Rubin and Rubin (1995), qualitative research is not looking for principles that are true all the time and in all conditions, like laws of physics; rather, the goal is to understand specific circumstances, how and why things actually happen in a complex world.

Data were collected from participants through confidential face-to-face interviews. Thirteen small schools leaders, who have met the criteria stated above, were sent letters of invitation to participate in the study. A reply form and a stamped, self-addressed envelope for each small school leader was enclosed. Responses were encouraged whether respondents agree to participate or choose not to participate. All respondents agreeing to participate in the interview signed and dated a consent form.

The researcher has chosen a qualitative method for data collection to gain a more in-depth personal understanding of school culture from the perspective of the men and women who lead schools-within-schools in an urban school setting. Seidman (1998) states the core to interviewing provides access to the context of people's behavior and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behavior. Interviewing allows us to put behavior in context and provides access to understanding their actions. Rubin and Rubin (1995) emphasize qualitative interviewing as "the art of hearing data" and finding out what others feel and think about their worlds, through which others understand experiences and reconstruct events in which they did not participate. According to (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992), interviewing is a purposeful conversation... that is directed by one in order to get information from another.

Interview Questions

Patton (2000) describes a standardized open-ended interview as of a set questions carefully worded and arranged with the intention of taking each respondent through the same sequence and asking each respondent the same questions with essentially the same words. Interview questions are worded carefully and written out in advance exactly the way they are to be asked in the interview. Probes are placed in the interview at appropriate places to minimize interviewer effects, thereby reducing interviewer judgment during the interview. The interview is highly focused so that interviewee time is used efficiently, and the exact instrument used is available for inspection by anyone who has interest in the findings. Collecting the same information from each person poses no credibility problem when each person is understood as a unique informant with a unique perspective. The standardized interview format keeps the conversation focused and on topic.

The questions used in this face-to-face interview were designed based on research and educational findings that indicate culture is a viable piece in the environment of a small school. A small school has an open atmosphere where everybody knows each other's name. Each individual student is valued as a part of the school family, which provides them with a sense of belonging that builds self-esteem and character. According to Gottfredson (1985), students in smaller schools fight less, feel safer, come to school more frequently, and report being more attached to their school. This instrument was created to assess school culture, which encompasses climate, student-teacher relationship, achievement, attendance, and discipline. The interview questions are as follows:

1. Background Information

1.1 How long have you been a small schools leader?

1.2 How many years have you worked in an urban school district?

1.3 How many years have you worked in the field of education?

2. School climate rationale: Hoy and Sabo (1998) describes an open school climate as an energetic, lively organization that is moving towards its goals while simultaneously providing satisfaction for the groups' social needs.

2.1 From your perspective, describe the overall atmosphere of the school.

2.2 Describe the three/four unique environments housed in this building.

2.3 What co-and extra curricular activities are available for students? Percentage of student involvement?

2.4 What types of incidents occur in this school, and how frequently do they occur?

3. Student-Teacher relationship rationale: Bank Street College of Education (2000) expressed teachers have high expectations for the students which often leads to high expectations in the students themselves. In small schools, close relationships exist and help raise expectations. The student senses just how much the teacher wants them to succeed. The student, in turn, does his or her best to meet the expectations.

3.1 Characterize the relationships between adults and students in this school.

3.2 What activities are in place to foster interpersonal relationships with students?

3.3 In your opinion, are students comfortable confiding in adults?

3.4 From your perspective, are teachers going the "extra mile" for kids?

4. Student achievement rationale: Cotton (2000) examined more than 100 studies and evaluations that concluded academic achievement in small schools was at least equal –

and often superior –to that of large schools. This holds true for students of all ability levels and in all kinds of settings.

- a. How do you feel about the academic standing of this school?
- b. In your opinion, are academic standards attacked rigorously?
- c. What do you think about the level of higher order thinking skills demonstrated by students?

5. Attendance rationale: Jordan and McPartland (2001) stated students are likely to attend school regularly when they get along with adults and feel personally expected to come to school every day and are missed when they are absent.

5.1 Describe the attendance problems, if any that exist in this school.

5.2 What procedures are in place concerning attendance?

Data Analysis

Interviews will be audio tape recorded and transcribed to provide the data base for this study. Responses will be examined to determine patterns and or themes for each question, as well as exceptions to patterns. To maintain accuracy and anonymity, each subject will be assigned a number code. The data will be reviewed, and all established patterns by respondents will be recorded. Those responses that are not in alignment with the established patterns will be noted as well. Seidman (1998) states,

Researchers must ask themselves what they have learned from doing the interviews, studying the transcripts, marking and labeling them, crafting profiles, and organizing categories of excerpts. What connective threads are there among the experiences of the participants the interviewed? How do they understand and explain these connections? What do they understand now, that they did not understand before they began the interviews? What surprises have there been? What confirmations of previous instincts? How have their interviews been

consistent with the literature? How inconsistent? How have they gone beyond? (pp. 110-111)

The data analyzed for this study should reveal patterns of small school culture, as well as other variables that impact small school environments.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to assess the perceptions of small school leaders concerning the culture in an urban schools-within-schools environment. This study also examined the key variables of school climate, teacher-student relationships, student achievement, discipline, and attendance. The interview questions selected were substantiated by relevant literature on small schools. Each question relates to the research questions being investigated.

This chapter presented an introduction and a discussion of the research procedures and methods of data collection and analysis for this study. It closed with a summary of the chapter.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to assess the perceptions of small school leaders concerning the culture in an urban schools-within-schools environment. This study also examined the areas of school climate including discipline, teacher-student relationships, student achievement, and attendance. A qualitative research methodology was utilized to gain insight about these findings. This chapter presents and analyzes these findings.

Nature of the Study

The research subject population selected for study consisted of building administrators located in the downsized high schools in the Cleveland Municipal School District that have been in existence for at least 3 or more years and serve students of a similar background (SES and ethnicity). There are three downsized high schools in the district that meet the requirements for this study. Two of the schools-within-schools are led by three small school leaders and a campus administrator. One school is led by four small school leaders and a campus administrator. As explained in chapter 3, due to district reorganization, two small school leaders were dropped from this study. Eight small school leaders and three campus administrators were invited to participate in this research. Eight small school leaders and three campus administrators responded, and all agreed to schedule interviews. The eight small school leaders and the three campus administrators interviewed represented 100% of the total subject population.

Small school leaders and campus administrators were asked a series of interview questions. A total of 16 questions were grouped into five sets. The first set of three questions was to gain basic information about the experience of study participants in the field of education. The second set of four questions asked the research participants about their perceptions of school climate, including discipline. A third set of four questions asked research participants their perceptions of student-teacher relationships in the schools-within-schools environment. The fourth set of three questions focused on student achievement. The fifth and final set of two questions focused specifically on attendance.

Presentation and Analysis of Findings

All 11 interviews took place in the offices of the small school leaders and the campus administrators interviewed.

The first set of three questions was to gain basic information about the experience of study participants in the field of education. In this set of questions, small school leaders and campus administrators were asked about the number of years leading in a small school, the number of years they worked in an urban school district, and the overall number of years they have worked in the field of education. These data are illustrated in Tables 1 and 2. These background data were utilized in an analysis of the small school leaders and campus administrators' responses to the research questions to determine if patterns existed.

Table 1

Background Information of Small School Leaders

Small school leader	Years in current assignment	Years in urban district	Years in the field of education
#1	2	25	25
#2	4	18	18
#3	2	20.5	20.5
#4	3	14	20
#5	3	14	14
#6	1	15	15
#7	2	6	15
#8	3	35	35
Averages	2.5	18.4	20.3

Table 2

Background Information of Campus Administrators

Campus administrator	Years in current assignment	Years in urban district	Years in the field of education
#1	4.5	32	32
#2	2.5	22	22
#3	1	28	28
Averages	2.6	27.3	27.3

Analysis of Discussions

School Climate

The second set of four questions asked the research participants about their perception of school climate in schools-within-schools. This set of questions also included a question related to discipline.

Hoy and Sabo (1998) describes an open school climate as an energetic, lively organization that is moving towards its' goals while simultaneously providing satisfaction for the groups' social needs. The basic characteristic of an open climate is the "authenticity" of behavior that occurs throughout the entire organization.

Research question 1: To what extent does the culture of schools-within-schools encourage the interpersonal relationships with adults that students need for success?

As a result of the interview process several overarching themes have been identified upon analysis of interview questions 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 pertaining to research question1. For the first question in this interview set, the researcher asked each small school leader and campus administrator: From your perspective, describe the overall atmosphere of the school.

This researcher found that five of the eight small school leaders and one campus administrator interviewed responded to this question by discussing the positive environments in their respective schools. They discussed the eagerness of students wanting to learn, respect and camaraderie among teachers, students and administrators and that the overall climate was conducive to learning. However, two of the small school leaders did identify the need for improvement concerning students walking the halls and

not realizing that education happens in the classroom. Small school leader #8 believed the climate was definitely positive and constantly improving.

Two small school leaders and one campus administrator felt the environments in their respective schools were going through a period of transition, and the goals of small schools were not being achieved in reality no matter how it appeared on paper. They attributed this to district downsizing. Small school leader #2 stated,

“The second and third years of small schools were real good years, and we could see changes in the kids taking ownership of their small school, discipline was down, fights and other incidents were down. This year being different because we had four small schools last year, one of them was dismantled and because of the way it was done, it’s almost like we are starting over.”

Small school leader #6 felt the relationship piece which is vital to the success of small schools was not happening and was a major reason why the goals were not being achieved.

One campus administrator gave the school climate a rating of C- and felt that the block schedule encouraged the right educational atmosphere, but the building was hectic. One small school leader felt the atmosphere was laid-back, and only about 60% of the student body was concerned with getting an education. She stated, “The staff that’s here, again for their comfort and safety, I don’t feel that education is their number one purpose for being here, educating students.”

The second question in this interview set, the researcher asked each small school leader and campus administrator: Describe the three/four unique environments housed in this building.

Six of the eight small school leaders and two of the three campus administrators discussed in detail the themes of each small school housed in their particular buildings.

They all gave an account of the varied curriculum offerings and the shared resources throughout the building. Campus administrator #1 discussed one school as being pure, not sharing any resources or staff with other small schools in the building.

Two of the small school leaders and one campus administrator discussed the particular personality of each school. Small school leader #1 felt that one school housed in the building had more of a family type setting, and the students were comfortable in their environment. She described another school as being elitist and the students having an air of superiority. The third school was described as laid back and not conforming to school rules. Small school leader #6 expressed that each school had its own distinct culture, and this was due to the personality and experience of the administrator in charge. Campus administrator #3 shared the exact same sentiment, that each school had its own personality which was reflective of the person leading the school. The sentiment expressed by these two leaders confirms research that indicates that the quality of leadership is an issue for many schools. The leader has the charge of conveying the vision of a school and motivating its members around common goals. Leaders who possess these skills ultimately will create optimal learning environments.

The third question in this interview set contained two parts. The researcher asked each small school leader and campus administrator: What co- and extra curricular activities are available for students? What is the percentage of student involvement?

All eight small school leaders and three campus administrators discussed the same athletic programs. Football, basketball, soccer, track, golf, tennis, wrestling, baseball, volleyball, softball, swimming, drill team, high steppers, and cheerleaders. Each small school leader and campus administrator discussed after school programs and clubs that

were sponsored by the different schools such as: chess clubs, book clubs, robotics teams, Junior ROTC, drama clubs, choir, instrumental music, east city entrepreneurial program, foreign language clubs, peer mediation, and student council. Although there seems to be an abundance of activities, one small school leader and one campus administrator did report the absence of intramurals and the need to increase non-athletic programs in their respective buildings.

Small school leader #1 indicated that there were a low percentage of students involved in the co- and extra-curricular activities. Small school leader #7 indicated the percentage of students participating in activities as fairly good. Four small school leaders and two campus administrators estimated the participation of students in these activities between 5 and 40 %. Two small school leaders and one campus administrator estimated the participation of students between 50 to 85 %. Campus administrators #2 and #3 both rated participation at 20 %. The differences reported by small school leaders may be attributed to them not having an accurate tally of student participation in various activities.

Discipline

According to Gottfredson (1985), students in smaller schools fight less, feel safer, come to school more frequently, and report being more attached to their school. Students in small schools are less likely to engage in violent physical altercations; they commit fewer infractions both major or minor (Raywid, 1995).

Research question 2: To what extent does the culture of schools-within-schools prevent violence and crime?

As a result of the interview process, several overarching themes have been identified upon analysis of interview question 2.4 pertaining to research question 2. To gather information for research question 2, the researcher asked each small school leader and campus administrator: What types of incidents occur in this school, and how frequently do they occur?

The researcher found that all three small school leaders and one campus administrator responded to this question by discussing incidents as typical in an urban school environment. The incidents included generational gang violence, daily fights among students, and student-teacher assaults both verbal and physical. Three small school leaders and one campus administrator discussed the influence of neighborhood gangs and the effects it has on the school environment. They also reported a new zero tolerance stance by the CEO of the school district as curtailing some of the gang activity. Small school leader #4 believed that positive relationships between adults and students could deter some of the gang violence. Three small school leaders and two campus administrators discussed the assaults that occur between teachers and students both verbal and physical in nature. Small school leader #7 stated, “The same thing that happens in every school and how often they occur depends on the month, depends on the cycle of the moon, depends on what’s going on with the child at home, depends on what’s going on with the teacher.”

One small school leader and one campus administrator discussed the occurrence of daily fights. Campus administrator #2 reported class cutting, smoking in restrooms, and a couple of incidents involving guns that were stopped before reaching the inside of the school building. Small school leader #1 discussed false fire alarms as a major problem

that had curtailed from daily to weekly. Two small school leaders reported low incidences at their respective schools, just the occasional fights spilling over into the school from neighborhood altercations. Small school leader #3 stated, “Ninety percent of the problems are referrals from teachers for disruptive classroom behavior.”

Student-Teacher Relationships

The third set of four questions asked research participants their perception of student-teacher relationships in schools-within-schools.

Bank Street College of Education (2000) expressed teachers have high expectations for the students, which often leads to high expectations in the students themselves. In small schools, close relationships exist and help raise expectations. The student senses just how much the teacher wants them to succeed. The student, in turn, does his or her best to meet the expectations.

Research question 1: To which extent does the culture of schools-within-schools encourage the interpersonal relationships with adults that students need for success?

As a result of the interview process, several overarching themes have been identified upon analysis of interview questions 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4 pertaining to research question 1. For the first question in this interview set, the researcher asked each small school leader and campus administrator: Characterize the relationships between adults and students in this school.

The researcher found that six of the eight small school leaders and all three of the campus administrators discussed the small school environment contributing to positive relationships between teachers and students. They all reported the smallness of the schools as being essential to teachers really knowing students better.

Small school leader # 2 stated that 90% of the teachers have excellent relationships with kids. She stated, “It’s nothing to go into a classroom and see teachers’ cell phone numbers on the board, or the teacher has given the number to kids. They have the home numbers, they talk to them, and they spend a lot of time on their free blocks tutoring kids.” She has also observed a few teachers who do not bond to kids; they will help a student if the kid approaches them, but they will not initiate the contact.

Small school leader #3 discussed mostly positive relationships but that poor classroom management creates problems that make teachers less effective.

Small school leader #4 stated the relationship with the small school has been great with both teachers and students. “They are able to monitor the success and progress of the student because they usually have those kids throughout the next 3 to 4 years so there’s camaraderie of respect, there’s a love and admiration that I think is built in without saying it.”

Campus administrator #2 stated that of the attributes of small schools, student and adult relationships are the area that we can say is the strongest.

Campus administrator #3 stated, “We are encouraging teachers to be like coaches; coaches have a special relationship with their athletes to bring them along, to develop them, make them better, and that’s what we want our teachers to be, so we’ve been working on that.”

Three small school leaders discussed the relationships between teachers and students as needing improvement. Small school leader #1 believes the nurturing that needs to take place has not happened, and the teachers do not possess the mentality of a small school environment. She stated, “Their purpose is to do what’s best for the

students. I think a lot of times, their mentality is, I have to do what's best for me, what's more comfortable for me, because of bad experiences I've had."

Small school leader #6 expressed that few teachers take the time to build relationships, but it is not on the level it should be for the small school concept to work. He discussed the lack of advocacy for students by teachers and no programs in place to help teachers, students, and parents build relationships, "I just don't see it."

Small school leader #7 feels that they are teachers who care but on a wide scale there is room for improvement.

"I think if you are in your car at 2:30 and you're going out the parking lot because it says that it's 2:30, when does a child have time to come to your room? I think as adults we need to be more accessible once the school day is over because they see you in a different light. When the bell rings and you're off duty, off kid time, and off teacher time, it's a whole other relationship that has the opportunity to build, that we don't take advantage of."

The second question in this interview set, the researcher asked each small school leader and campus administrator: What activities are in place to foster interpersonal relationships with students?

The researcher found that four of the eight small school leaders and one campus administrator discussed extracurricular activities, clubs, and after-school programs as the vehicle to foster interpersonal relationships with students. One small school leader and one campus administrator discussed the advisory period as the vehicle to foster relationships with students. They explained that a teacher was responsible for mentoring at least 15 students. Small school leader #2 discussed the fact the advisory program had diminished, but those relationships that were established still exist, and it was through advisories that the chess club, book club, and Bible study groups were formed.

Three small school leaders and one campus administrator discussed that there were no formal programs in existence to foster interpersonal relationships with students. Small school leader #1 indicated that there has been training on relationship building, diversity, and resiliency that has had no observable impact on student-teacher relationships. Campus administrator #3 stated that there has been a battle between the teacher's union and administration concerning adding the advisory period.

The third question in this interview set, the researcher asked each small school leader and campus administrator: In your opinion, are students comfortable confiding in adults?

This researcher found that five of the eight small school leaders and one campus administrator felt that students were comfortable confiding in adults within the school community. They reported that students often divulge too much information. Small school leader #5 stated "We know our students; they confide in us, they tell us things that you wouldn't think they would tell."

One small school leader and one campus administrator felt that some kids were comfortable confiding in adults. Campus administrator #2 stated that there is a code of ethics, and students in urban areas do not want to be known as a "snitch."

Two small school leaders and one campus administrator felt that there were very few students comfortable confiding in adults and that overall the answer would be no. Small school leader #1 felt that it was a lack of trust that made students leery confiding in adults.

The fourth and final question in this interview set, the researcher asked each small school leader and campus administrator: From your perspective, are teachers going the “extra mile” for kids?

This researcher found three of the eight small school leaders and one campus administrator discussed the majority of their teachers going beyond the call duty for students. They discussed teachers giving out money, buying clothes, driving students to interviews, doing whatever it takes to help a student be successful. Small school leader #4 stated “We go beyond the call of duty; I know as an administrator, I am still a teacher first, and I just yesterday was helping a kid put a book report together; no one wants to fail a child.” Small school leader #8 feels that students know teachers are willing to help them. Campus administrator #3 stated, “The vast majority of our teachers are going the extra mile. Kids want to be in those classes, aren’t late to those classes, then you have a few that, the teacher is operating by the letter but not necessarily the spirit, doing what they have to on paper.”

Five of the small school leaders and two campus administrators discussed that some to very few teachers went the extra mile for kids. Small school leader #5 felt that the teachers could do better and that was an area that definitely was in need of improvement. Campus administrator #2 felt that small schools had not helped to increase the number of teachers going above and beyond for students. Small school leader #7 measured the amount of dedication to the number of teachers who are out of the parking lot before kids can get out of the school building.

Student Achievement

The fourth set of three questions asked research participants their perceptions of academic achievement in schools-within-schools.

Cotton (2000) examined more than 100 studies and evaluations that concluded academic achievement in small schools was at least equal – and often superior –to that of large schools. This holds true for students of all ability levels and in all kinds of settings.

Research question 3: To what extent does the culture of schools- within- schools, foster students in reaching high academic standards?

As a result of the interview process, several overarching themes have been identified upon analysis of interview questions 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 pertaining to research question 3. For the first question in this interview set, the researcher asked each small school leader and campus administrator: How do you feel about the academic standing of this school?

This researcher found that five of the eight small school leaders and all three campus administrators were not happy with the academic standing of their respective schools. They discussed that small academic gains had been made, and all were under the gun to make adequate yearly progress as defined by the State of Ohio.

Small school leader #1 felt that instruction lacked rigor and that teachers had low expectations for students. She also questioned the capacity of teachers and felt they were mediocre themselves. Small school leader #3 believed that attendance and tardiness were having a negative impact on achievement and that resources were limited. Small school leader #5 felt that staff needed to support academics more and believed that could raise the achievement level. Small school leader #6 feels that the district gives lip service to

raising the academic standing, and little is being done to improve teaching practices and remove incompetent teachers. Small school leader #7 stated, “If you build that relationship, you can enable a child to see the worthiness of themselves. You can’t build self-esteem and motivation in a child and don’t have a relationship with a child, you have to know who you’re teaching.”

Small school leaders #2, #8, and #4 felt that the academic standing of their respective schools was okay and that standards were set high and rigor and relevancy were observable in classroom instruction.

The second question in this interview set, the researcher asked each small school leader and campus administrator: In your opinion, are academic standards attacked rigorously?

This researcher found four of the eight small school leaders and two of the campus administrators felt that academic standards were not being attacked rigorously.

Small school leader #2 stated, “That there was still a few teachers in the 80 minute block after 35 minutes kids are out in the hallways because they’re finished with their work, and I’m working with the teachers so that they know that this lesson should be continued and on going.” Small school leader #5 stated that staff development was needed to increase academic rigor, and teachers were afraid to step out of the box.

Small school leaders #4 and #8 and campus administrator #2 discussed that they felt academic standards were being attacked rigorously.

Small school leader #8 discussed that during her walk, she observed standards posted and other objectives posted and teachers having them on the board.

Campus administrator #2 stated, “I think we do attack them rigorously, but I don’t think everybody has the same focus. I think the administrators do try to keep the focus on academic rigor and academic standards, but you have teachers of all different knowledge backgrounds, experienced backgrounds and capabilities so it’s not a unified force that you have working vigorously at it.” This same sentiment was shared by small school leader #7.

Small school leader #3 observed rigor in 50 to 60 % of classrooms. He discussed that a workshop was offered that showed teachers which standards and benchmarks kids had mastered on last year’s test and the fact that only 10 teachers attended.

The third and final question in this interview set, the researcher asked each small school leader and campus administrator: What do you think about the level of higher order thinking skills demonstrated by students?

This researcher found seven of the eight small school leaders and all three campus administrators discussed students not being challenged enough in classrooms, so the opportunities for students to demonstrate higher order thinking skills were limited. They were all pleasantly surprised when students performed at higher levels, took ownership for their learning and/or demonstrated critical thinking skills. All research participants felt that this was an area in need of improvement. One small school leader discussed the level demonstrated by students as being outstanding.

Small school leader #5 stated that students needed to read more and problem solve instead of taking the easy way out. Small school leader #6 believed that students were not being graded against the same measures that their counterparts were in the suburbs and that they were not challenged and given the skills needed for success on the post

secondary level. Small school leader #7 feels that as educators we just do not expect enough from kids. Campus administrator #1 stated, “There are too many instances where kids are not being challenged, and when I look at the creativity that the students use to do negative things and try to get them to understand that if just redirect that same creativity into your academics, just imagine where you would be.”

Attendance

The fifth and final set of two questions asked research participants their perceptions of attendance in schools-within-schools.

Jordan and McPartland (2001) stated students are likely to attend school regularly when they get along with adults and feel personally expected to come to school every day and are missed when they are absent.

Research question 4: To what extent does the culture of schools-within-schools reduce absenteeism by both students and teachers?

As a result of the interview process, several overarching themes have been identified upon analysis of interview questions 5.1 and 5.2 pertaining to research question 4. For the first question in this interview set, the researcher asked each small school leader and campus administrator: Describe the attendance problems, if any that exist in this school.

The researcher found that all eight small school leaders and all three campus administrators discussed tardiness and truancy as the major problems with attendance. The sentiment is that it is a district and community problem. Parents keep children out of school to watch younger siblings and do not seem to make coming to school a priority.

Homeroom time has been moved to later in the day to aid in getting a higher percentage of students present.

Small school leader #1 stated, “The lackadaisical attitude which has been allowed to permeate, so that when they get here, they get here. Teachers don’t start class on time because they know that they are not coming on time, which again displays into the whole okay whatever attitude.”

Small school leader #4 discussed encouraging teachers to call home if a student is not present at least by the second day. She feels this would maybe make students respond better and feel that people cared if more interest was shown by the adults in the school community.

Small school leader #7 stated, “I think in the urban setting, that’s always been a struggle, because a lot of kids have so many other things going on at home that coming to school becomes secondary, tertiary and not only coming but the time that they arrive.” Campus administrator #2 also believes that it is due to the socioeconomic status of the students.

The second and final question in this interview set, the researcher asked each small school leader and campus administrator: What procedures are in place concerning attendance?

This researcher found all eight small school leaders and all three campus administrators discussed that attendance committees were established to combat the attendance problems. All research participants reported working on an incentive plan to encourage students to come to school and following the district policy of removing students after five consecutive absences and having students re-enroll. Each research

subject discussed the attendance liaison that makes home visits and telephone calls to parents. The constant encouragement of teachers to call homes and parent volunteers that aid in this endeavor.

Small school leader #3 stated, “At this point we don’t call kids who are tardy on a regular basis, basically we do what the district tells us to, if you miss five days in a row, you are taken off the roll, we really don’t have a system in place to address the tardiness which I think is the biggest problem.”

Small school leader #6 stated, “After five days of course they are withdrawn from the district having to come back and re-enroll, but often times that, many people I see doing that to, in some instances, just to receive benefits, when the benefits are being threatened to be cut, then all of a sudden the child shows up for school and so I think it’s a mind set that we’re dealing with next to the culture and we’re going to have to attack it at that level in order for us to see improvement in attendance, and that’s what’s lacking.”

Small school leader #7 expressed that the numbers are just too massive, and there should more staff designated to attendance.

Summary

The findings covered a range of perspectives that indicate the schools-within-schools reform effort in the Cleveland Municipal School District is not mimicking the culture of small schools. The culture has not produced strong relationships between adults and students. Students in the schools-within-schools have not bonded with the adults in the school community; there is no atmosphere of family or mutual respect. The achievement level of students is dismal at best; the curriculum has not been individualized to strengthen the weaknesses and enrich the strengths of each student.

This researcher found that the culture of the schools-within-schools has not materialized because the adults have not fully implemented or accepted the essence of a small school environment. Teachers were not adequately trained, nor did they elect to be part of this reform. Parent participation was not reported as part of the school culture. The findings also indicate that the benefits reported when children are educated in a culture of small individualized learning environments, with high expectations and a clear focus on student learning created by caring adults are not being reaped by the children in Cleveland's schools-within-schools.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to assess the perceptions of small school leaders in the Cleveland Municipal School District concerning the culture in an urban schools-within-schools environment. This study also examined the areas of school climate including discipline, teacher-student relationships, student achievement, and attendance. Chapter 1 presents the problem to be studied: What is the perspective of school culture of urban leaders in schools-within-schools? Chapter 2 contains a review of literature that focuses on schools-within-schools reform, national interest and financial support, schools-within-schools structures, small school culture, school climate including discipline, academic success of students, relationships of student-teacher, and attendance. Chapter 3 contains a description of the methodology used in this study to evaluate the responses of urban small school leaders. Chapter 4 includes an analysis of data collected. Chapter 5 offers a summary, conclusions, and recommendations for policy, practice, and future research.

Four research questions were asked: (a) To what extent does the culture of schools-within-schools, encourage the interpersonal relationships with adults that students need for success? (b) To what extent does the culture of schools-within-schools prevent violence and crime? (c) To what extent does the culture of schools-within-schools foster students in reaching high academic standards? (d) To what extent does the culture of schools-within-schools reduce absenteeism by both students and teachers?

In order to address these research questions, eight small school leaders and three campus administrators were interviewed in their offices and asked questions related to the research questions.

Summary of Research

There is an overwhelming amount of evidence that suggests the culture of small schools yields itself to interpersonal relationships between students and the adults in the school community. The students display less violence, attend school more regularly, and perform better academically in small school environments. To replicate the benefits of small schools, large comprehensive high schools have been downsized into schools-within-schools. The researcher analyzed the responses in order to determine the perceptions of school culture in schools-within-schools of each small school leader and campus administrator and subsequently draw conclusions based on similarities and differences in responses. The findings of this study are enumerated in the following paragraphs.

Research question 1 was: To what extent does the culture of schools-within-schools encourage the interpersonal relationships with adults that students need for success? In order to elicit these perceptions, participants were asked three questions pertaining to school climate and four questions pertaining to student-teacher relationships. Under the category of school climate participants were asked: From your perspective, describe the overall atmosphere of the school. Hoy and Sabo (1998) describe an open school climate as an energetic, lively organization that is moving towards its goals while simultaneously providing satisfaction for the group's social needs. The basic characteristic of an open climate is the "authenticity" of behavior that occurs throughout the entire organization.

NASSP (2005b) cite that creating a supportive environment that cultivates a student's sense of belonging, ownership of learning, and recognition of and ability to make good choices is crucial to the learning experience.

The researcher found that five of the eight small school leaders and one campus administrator interviewed responded to this question by commenting on the positive environments in their respective schools. They discussed the eagerness of students wanting to learn, respect and camaraderie among teachers, students and administrators and that the overall climate was conducive to learning. However, two of the small school leaders identified students walking the halls and not realizing that education happens in the classroom as a major concern and area in need of improvement. Three of the small school leaders and two campus administrators communicated that their respective schools were still going through transition and that the goals of small schools were not being achieved. Students were not attending classes and teachers had not captured the essence of relationship building that is unique to small schools.

Although these three high schools have been downsized for more than 3 years, there is a split in the perceptions of the environments. The researcher found that 60 % of the environments align to the literature on school climate as discussed in chapter 2. Forty percent of the environments are in direct contradiction with the literature. Hoy and Sabo (1998) cite that a healthy school is one where participants want to be rather than are forced to be. This researcher believes that the concept of smallness and relationship building is still not apparent throughout the downsized high schools. Constant change of personnel that did not elect to work in a small school environment does not aid the reform efforts, but increases transition time and ultimately hinders progress of the reform.

The researcher asked each small school leader and campus administrator: Describe the three/four unique environments housed in this building. The researcher found that six of the eight small school leaders and two of the three campus administrators discussed in detail the themes of each small school housed in their particular buildings. They all gave an account of the varied curriculum offerings and the shared resources throughout the building. Two of the small school leaders and one campus administrator discussed the particular personality of each small school and that the culture of each small school was reflective of the experience of the administrator in charge. It was also reported that some schools had an air of superiority and felt that they were the elite group of students in the school. This majority response to this question supported the literature in chapter 2 on the structure of SWS environments. It also supports the Coalition of Essential Schools conclusions that the SWS structure is divisive and likely to introduce contention (Muncey & McQuillan, 1991).

This researcher found it interesting that more small school leaders and campus administrators did not communicate the uniqueness of each small school environment and instead focused on the organization and structure of the schools housed in each building. This researcher believes that these statements confirm that the concept of individuality has not been ingrained into the hearts and minds of all members of the school community and the district at large. The pride and uniqueness that students display should be apparent throughout each small school and not limited to those schools where the leader has greater vision and or skill at capacity building.

When the researcher asked each small school leader and campus administrator the last question pertaining to school climate: What co-and extra-curricular activities are

available for students? What is the percentage of student involvement? The researcher found that the majority of small school leaders and campus administrators discussed the same athletic programs: football, basketball, soccer, track, golf, tennis, wrestling, baseball, volleyball, softball, swimming, drill team, high steppers, and cheerleaders. Each small school leader and campus administrator discussed after school programs and clubs that were sponsored by the different schools such as: chess clubs, book clubs, robotics teams, Junior ROTC, drama clubs, choir, instrumental music, East City entrepreneurial program, foreign language clubs, peer mediation, and student council. Although there seems to be an abundance of activities, one small school leader and one campus administrator did report the absence of intramurals and the need to increase non-athletic programs in their respective buildings.

Four small school leaders and two campus administrators estimated the participation of students in these activities between 5 and 40 %. Two small school leaders and one campus administrator estimated the participation of students between 50 to 85%. Two Campus administrators reported in the previous range both rated participation at 20 %. The amount of co-and extra-curricular activities offered is congruent with the literature in chapter 2 on SWS structures, which states students will have activities that are unique to their small school and activities that are shared by the larger school (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). In contradiction with the literature cited in chapter 2 on school climate, the percentage of student involvement in the activities offered is low. The smallness should create a greater need of participation from students in order for activities to be successful. This researcher believes that a great

number of students are still alienated and not actively involved in the daily functions of the school.

When the researcher asked each small school leader and campus administrator the first question pertaining to student-teacher relationships: Characterize the relationships between adults and students in this school. Bank Street College of Education (2000) expressed teachers as having high expectations for the students which often leads to high expectations in the students themselves. In small schools, close relationships exist and help raise expectations. The student senses just how much the teacher wants them to succeed. The student, in turn, does his or her best to meet the expectations. The researcher found that six of the eight small school leaders and all 3 of the campus administrators discussed the small school environment contributing to positive relationships between teachers and students. They all reported the smallness of the schools as being essential to teachers really knowing students better. Three small school leaders discussed the relationships between teachers and students as needing improvement.

The researcher found that the majority of responses were consistent the literature cited in chapter 2 on student-teacher relationships. According to Bryk and Driscoll (1998), individuals are involved with one another not merely because they are engaged on the same task, but because they are socially connected as well. This researcher believes the three small schools that have not fully developed the relationship piece of small schools can attribute it to the staff not having total buy-in concerning the reform. The researcher suggests that more relationship building is done between staff and later integrated with student involvement. If the condition does not improve replacing current

staff with staff members of the same mindset may be the ultimate solution to the problem, especially since according to the literature teachers in small schools are usually there by choice so they have a strong, even intense level of commitment (Maeroff, 1998).

When the researcher asked each small school leader and campus administrator the second question pertaining to student-teacher relationships: What activities are in place to foster interpersonal relationships with students? The researcher found that four of the eight small school leaders and one campus administrator discussed extracurricular activities, clubs and after-school programs as the vehicle to foster interpersonal relationships with students. One small school leader and one campus administrator discussed the advisory period as the vehicle to foster relationships with students. They explained that a teacher was responsible for mentoring at least 15 students. Three small school leaders and one campus administrator discussed that there were no formal programs in existence to foster interpersonal relationships between teachers and students. Campus administrator #3 stated that there has been a battle between the teacher's union and administration concerning adding the advisory period.

The researcher finds this to be contradictory to the literature that suggests in small schools, adults give more attention to each student (Maeroff, 1998). This researcher concludes that no formal program exists to foster relationships between teachers and students. The acknowledgment of small school leader #2 discussing the fact that the advisory program had diminished, but those relationships that were established still exist and it was through advisories that the chess club, book club, and Bible study groups were formed is a testament to the importance of these types of programs for relationship building. The schools that have this vehicle in place should see increased engagement

between those students and adults, if and only if the program is functioning as intended and not just in place on the paper. The campus leader expressing the challenges of implementing such a program due to contractual constraints is confirmation that the district did not place teachers in small schools by choice, but rather by seniority and the availability of open teaching positions.

When the researcher asked each small school leader and campus administrator the third question pertaining to teacher-student relationships: In your opinion, are students comfortable confiding in adults? This researcher found that five of the eight small school leaders and one campus administrator felt that students were comfortable confiding in adults within the school community. One small school leader and one campus administrator felt that some kids were comfortable confiding in adults. Two small school leaders and one campus administrator felt that there were very few students comfortable confiding in adults and that overall the answer would be no. This researcher found that the responses were split pertaining to this question and were not consistent with the research that suggests students in small schools develop relationships that most often extend beyond the school year. Staff members in small schools interact informally with students, giving them freedom to access information from a large pool of adults (Bank Street College of Education, 2000). This researcher concluded that on a large scale, students were not comfortable confiding in adults and feels this is due to disconnect between teachers and students. Participants responded that students were more comfortable with security officers and paraprofessionals which ultimately do not impact the environment in the classroom.

When this researcher asked each small school leader and campus administrator the fourth and final question pertaining to teacher-student relationships: From your perspective, are teachers going the “extra mile” for kids? This researcher found three of the eight small school leaders and one campus administrator discussed the majority of their teachers going beyond the call duty for students. They discussed teachers giving out money, buying clothes, driving students to interviews, doing whatever it takes to help a student be successful. Five of the small school leaders and two campus administrators discussed that some to very few teachers went the extra mile for kids. The researcher found that the overwhelming response was that teachers did not go the extra mile for students. This is a direct contradiction to the literature cited in chapter 2 on teacher-student relationships that are found in small schools. In small schools, teachers and students have a social connection that allows students to see that teachers have a genuine concern for them as people, and this develops social cohesion that results in high academic achievement (Bryk & Driscoll, 1998). This researcher believes the consensus concerning this question contradicts responses provided earlier in the interview that there were positive relationships between teachers and students.

Research question 2 was: To what extent does the culture of schools-within-schools prevent violence and crime? In order to elicit these perceptions, participants were asked one question pertaining to discipline: What types of incidents occur in this school, and how frequently do they occur? According to Gottfredson (1985), students in smaller schools fight less, feel safer, come to school more frequently, and report being more attached to their school. Students in small schools are less likely to engage in violent physical altercations; they commit fewer infractions both major or minor (Raywid, 1995).

The researcher found that all three small school leaders and one campus administrator responded to this question by discussing incidents as typical in an urban school environment. The incidents included generational gang violence, daily fights among students, and student-teacher assaults both verbal and physical. Three small school leaders and one campus administrator discussed the influence of neighborhood gangs and the effects it has on the school environment. They also reported a new zero tolerance stance by the CEO of the school district as curtailing some of the gang activity. Three small school leaders and two campus administrators discussed the assaults that occur between teachers and students both verbal and physical in nature. One small school leader and one campus administrator discussed the occurrence of daily fights.

The researcher found that the common thread throughout the responses was not consistent with the literature cited in chapter 2 on school climate. The researcher believes that the responses to this question add validity to the fact that the small school environment created by this reform effort has had little impact on the violence in urban schools. The reported assaults on teachers by students both verbal and physical in nature confirm that the relationships that are created by smallness are not present in schools-within-schools. The reported fighting between students attests to the lack of “family” that is a by-product of the small school environment. This researcher believes that this is evidence of students and teachers not choosing to be a part of the small school reform effort which ultimately results in failure. Raywid (1999) found a lack of commitment to the small school concept, either in design or implementation, lack of autonomy and separateness of the subunit or sub-school, and failure to align cultural and structural

change are the factors that are most present when a SWS does not yield small school benefits.

Researcher question 3 was: To what extent does the culture of schools-within-schools foster students in reaching high academic standards? In order to elicit these perceptions, participants were asked three questions pertaining to academic achievement. The first question the researcher asked each small school leader and campus administrator: How do you feel about the academic standing of this school? Cotton (2000) examined more than 100 studies and evaluations that concluded academic achievement in small schools was at least equal – and often superior –to that of large schools. This holds true for students of all ability levels and in all kinds of settings. This researcher found that five of the eight small school leaders and all three campus administrators were not happy with the academic standing of their respective schools. They discussed that small academic gains had been made, and all were under the gun to make adequate yearly progress as defined by the state of Ohio. Small school leaders #2, #8, and #4 felt that the academic standing of their respective schools was adequate and that standards were set high and rigor and relevancy were observable in classroom instruction.

This researcher found the responses to this question in direct contradiction with the literature cited in chapter 2 on academic achievement in small schools, but consistent with a more recent study that concluded smaller settings had no significant academic advantage for urban and minority students (Viadero, 2006). This researcher believes that the amount of literature that supports academic advantages of small school environments outweigh those disputing academic advantages. The relationship that produces more

individualized instruction is a recurring theme throughout the literature base on small schools, according to Cotton(1996a), “In a small school you can be somebody,” to be known and acknowledged is essential to the psychological well-being of humans and learning,(p. 9). Love and Kruger (2005) stated that successful teachers of African American children create a community of learners much like an extended family. It is the totality of the small school environment that needs to be mimicked to see the results academically of small schools. In respect to the three non-conforming respondents concerning academic achievement, the researcher found their responses intriguing due to the fact that each school is in academic emergency, the lowest rating given by the State of Ohio.

When the researcher asked each small school leader and campus administrator the second question pertaining to academic achievement: In your opinion, are academic standards attacked rigorously? This researcher found four of the eight small school leaders and two of the campus administrators felt that academic standards were not being attacked rigorously. Small school leader # 2 stated that “there was a still a few teachers in the 80 minute block after 35 minutes kids are out in the hallways because they’re finished with their work, and I’m working with teachers so that they know that this lesson should be continued and on going.” Campus administrator #2 stated, “I think we do attack them rigorously, but I don’t think everybody has the same focus. I think the administrators do try to keep the focus on academic rigor and academic standards, but you have teachers of all different knowledge backgrounds, experienced backgrounds, and capabilities so it’s not a unified force that you have working vigorously at it.” This same sentiment was shared by small school leader #7.

The researcher found the common thread throughout this question was the majority of respondents did not feel standards were being attacked rigorously in classrooms. This is inconsistent with the literature cited in chapter 2 on academic achievement. The researcher found that the leaders felt they were portraying the right message to teachers concerning standards and rigor, but implementation was not happening in the classrooms. These responses would be in alignment with the academic standing of the schools. This researcher believes that this problem can only be rectified by a change in district policy concerning the evaluation of teacher performance.

When the researcher asked each small school leader and campus administrator the third question pertaining to academic achievement: What do you think about the level of higher order thinking skills demonstrated by students? This researcher found seven of the eight small school leaders and all three campus administrators discussed students not being challenged enough in classrooms, so the opportunities for students to demonstrate higher order thinking skills were limited. They were all pleasantly surprised when students performed at higher levels, took ownership for their learning, and/or demonstrated critical thinking skills. All 10 research participants felt that this was an area in need of improvement. One small school leader discussed the level demonstrated by students as being outstanding.

This researcher found these responses to be consistent with the literature cited in chapter 2 on achievement. Evidence of the self-fulfilling prophesy is strongly observed in small school environments; teachers have high expectations and students, in turn, try their best to please their teachers and reach their expectations (Bank Street College of Education, 2000). If the expectations for students are low, then they produce at the

expected level. This is truly not the observed mind set of teachers in small schools, but it is the self-fulfilling prophesy at its worst. The one non-conforming respondent may have the one school in which students have demonstrated the ability to think critically and more opportunity to demonstrate a higher skill level.

Research question 4 was: To what extent does the culture of schools-within-schools reduce absenteeism by both students and teachers? In order to elicit these perceptions, participants were asked two questions pertaining to attendance. Jordan and McPartland (2001) stated students are likely to attend school regularly when they get along with adults and feel personally expected to come to school every day and are missed when they are absent. The researcher found that all eight small school leaders and all three campus administrators discussed tardiness and truancy as the major problems with attendance. The sentiment is that it is a district and community problem. Parents keep children out of school to watch younger siblings and do not seem to make coming to school a priority. Homeroom time has been moved to later in the day to aide in get a higher percentage of students present. Small school leader #7 stated, "I think in the urban setting, that's always been a struggle, because a lot of kids have so many other things going on at home that coming to school becomes secondary, tertiary and not only coming, but the time that they arrive."

This researcher found that the commonality of the responses to be a direct contradiction of the high attendance levels cited in the literature in chapter 2 on attendance, but consistent with the correlation between attendance and achievement. According to Dekalb (1999), students often cite boredom and loss of interest in school, irrelevant courses, suspensions, and bad relationships with teachers, poor academics,

social isolation and friends not attending school as reasons for their non-attendance. All of which should be rectified by the small school environment and the relationships that it fosters. This researcher has concluded that the community issues found in urban ghettos that impede students from attending school need to be addressed through public policy. Students with parents receiving state aid should be required to document the attendance of their children in schools as part of the requirement of receiving those monies and health benefits. There was no mention of teacher attendance by any respondent.

When this researcher asked each small school leader and campus administrator the second and final question pertaining to attendance: What procedures are in place concerning attendance? This researcher found all eight small school leaders and all three campus administrators discussed that attendance committees were established to combat the attendance problems. All research participants reported working on an incentive plan to encourage students to come to school. The district policy of removing students after five consecutive absences and having students re-enroll. Each research subject discussed the attendance liaison that makes home visits and telephone calls to parents. The constant encouragement of teachers to call homes and parent volunteers that aid in this endeavor. Small school leader #6 stated, "After 5 days of course they are withdrawn from the district having to come back and re-enroll, but often times that, many people I see doing that to, in some instances, just to receive benefits, when the benefits are being threatened to be cut, then all of a sudden the child shows up for school and so I think it's a mind set that we're dealing with next to the culture and we're going to have to attack it at that level in order for us to see improvement in attendance, and that's what's lacking."

Small school leader #7 expressed that the numbers are just too massive and there should more staff designated to attendance.

The researcher found that the commonality expressed by respondents indicate that there are no systematic procedures to combat the issue of non-attendance of students. The district policy to raise attendance percentages improves numbers slightly, but does not ensure children are in school receiving an education. The fact that the numbers are too massive for the staff to handle is also confirmation that the idea of “smallness” is just that, an idea. According to Lindsay (1984), student satisfaction and attendance are higher at small schools. In fact, small schools were three to four times more likely to have attendance rates over 95%. Relationships are the foundation of small schools and, without it, none of the other benefits cited in the literature will materialize.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to assess the perceptions of small school leaders concerning the culture in an urban schools-within-schools environment. This study also examined the areas of school climate including discipline, teacher-student relationships, student achievement, and attendance.

Four research questions were asked: (a) To what extent does the culture of schools-within-schools, encourage the interpersonal relationships with adults that students need for success? (b) To what extent does the culture of schools-within-schools prevent violence and crime? (c) To what extent does the culture of schools-within-schools foster students in reaching high academic standards? (d) To what extent does the culture of schools-within-schools reduce absenteeism by both students and teachers? In order to address these research questions, eight small school leaders and three campus

administrators were interviewed in their offices and asked questions related to the research questions.

Research Question #1

To what extent does the culture of schools-within-schools, encourage the interpersonal relationships with adults that students need for success?

The responses given by each small school leader and campus administrator led this researcher to conclude that the concept of smallness and relationship building is still not apparent throughout the schools-within-schools. Constant change of personnel that did not elect to work in small school environments has hindered reform efforts, because the concept of individuality has not been ingrained into the hearts and minds of all members of the school community and the district at large. The pride and uniqueness that students display should be apparent throughout each small school and not limited to those schools where the leader has greater vision and or skill at capacity building. This researcher concluded that a great number of students are still alienated, not comfortable confiding in adults and not actively involved in the daily functions of the school community.

Research Question #2

To what extent does the culture of schools-within-schools prevent violence and crime?

The responses given by each small school leader and campus administrator led this researcher to conclude that the small school environment created by this reform effort has had little to no impact on the violence in urban high schools. The reported assaults on teachers by students, both verbal and physical in nature, and the daily fighting amongst

students confirm that the relationships that are created by smallness are not present in schools-within-schools.

Research Question #3

To what extent does the culture of schools-within-schools, foster students in reaching high academic standards?

The responses given by each small school leader and campus administrator led this researcher to conclude that students are not achieving at higher levels academically in the schools-within-schools environment. Although school leaders are directing their teachers towards rigorous standards-based instruction, implementation at the classroom level is low to non-existent. Students are not being challenged to think critically, and teacher expectation is not geared towards higher achievement.

Research Question #4

To what extent does the culture of schools-within-schools reduce absenteeism by both students and teachers?

The responses given by each small school leader and campus administrator leads this researcher to conclude that tardiness and truancy are the major attendance problems in schools-within-schools. The sentiment is that it is a district and community problem. There are no systematic procedures to combat the issue of non-attendance of students. The district policy to remove students from the roles after five consecutive absences creates an illusion of higher attendance percentages, but does not ensure children are in school receiving an education. The fact that the numbers are too massive for the staff to handle is also confirmation that the idea of “smallness” is just that, an idea. Teacher attendance was not addressed by any of the respondents.

Policy Recommendations

1. A serious commitment to a “ZERO” tolerance policy concerning violence.
2. An effective evaluation system for teacher performance.
3. A push for public policy concerning the non-attendance of students whose parents receive state aid to alleviate unreasonable absences.
4. A teachers’ contract that supports the organization and structure of schools-within-school.

Practice Recommendations

1. Time allocated for planning and collaboration between teachers to build culture.
2. Professional development geared towards relationship building that includes all members of the school community.
3. Replace non-conforming staff with staff members who are committed to the small schools concept and ideology.
4. Professional development geared towards increasing parental involvement in urban schools.
5. Partnerships with local universities and businesses to add credence to the reform effort.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. A study of small school leader perceptions in other urban areas to compare results.
2. A study investigating the perceptions of teachers in schools-within-schools related to school culture.
3. A study investigating the perceptions of high school seniors in schools-within-

schools related to school culture.

4. A study investigating the perceptions of parents whose children attend schools-within-schools related to school culture.
5. A study on school culture similar to this one assessing the perceptions of small school leaders from west side schools-within-schools in the Cleveland Municipal School District.
6. A comparative study of comprehensive high schools to schools-within-schools investigating student achievement.
7. A comparative study of all urban schools-within-schools across the State of Ohio investigating student achievement.
8. A qualitative study that examines teacher behaviors in schools-within-schools.
9. A qualitative study that examines student dynamics in schools-within-schools.
10. A study that examines the organization and structure of downsizing high schools.
11. A quantitative study that examines schools-within-schools across the country investigating student achievement over an extended period of time.
12. A study that investigates the effects of school size on urban high school students.
13. A study that examines attendance patterns of high school students in urban, suburban, and rural school districts.
14. A study that examines the skills of successful urban school leaders vs. leaders in suburban/rural school districts.

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Appendix A

Small School Leader's Letter

Dear Small School Leader:

My name is Octavia Reid. I am completing a doctoral dissertation in Education Leadership, Management and Policy at Seton Hall University, College of Education and Human Services, on the subject of School Culture. The title of the study is *“School Culture: Perspectives of Urban Small School Leaders.”* This qualitative study will be comprised of three background questions and thirteen interview questions concerning school culture in downsized high schools.

I am requesting to conduct a face to face interview that should last no longer than forty-five minutes. The interview would be held in your office at a mutually agreed upon time. If your office is not available, arrangements can be made to change the location. I will make notes of your responses as well as tape-record the dialogue with your permission. The information gathered will be used solely for the purpose of analysis and the confidentiality of the interviews will be preserved. Only the researcher and the dissertation committee will have access to this data. Notes and tapes will be coded by number for confidentiality and no personal identifying information will be revealed. All recorded and documented responses will be kept in a secure, locked cabinet in the researcher’s home for three years and destroyed after the allotted time period.

Participation in this study would be voluntary and the participant has the right to terminate involvement at any time. Refusal to participate in the study or discontinuing participation at any time will involve no penalty or loss of benefits that the subject is otherwise entitled.

It is my hope that this study will enhance our understanding of school culture in small high schools. If you are willing to participate in this study, please complete and return the enclosed reply form. I will contact you to arrange a time and place for our discussion, and forward the interview questions before our initial meeting. If you have any questions you may contact me at (216) 337-8750. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Octavia Reid

Appendix B

Reply Form

REPLY FORM**School Culture: Perspectives of Urban Small School Leaders**

Name: _____

School: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Best hours to contact: _____

A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your response.

Thank You,

Return To: Octavia A. Reid

Appendix C
Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Researcher's Affiliation

Octavia A. Reid is completing a doctoral dissertation in Education Leadership, Management and Policy at Seton Hall University, College of Education and Human Services.

Purpose

The purpose of Octavia A. Reid's study is to investigate School Culture: Perspectives of Urban Small School Leaders. The interview should take approximately forty-five minutes.

Procedures

Participants will be interviewed by the researcher. The researcher will make notes of the responses as well as tape-record the dialogue. Interviews will be conducted on each of the East Side Small School Campuses.

Instruments

The interview will consist of the researcher asking three background questions and thirteen open –ended questions in an attempt to gain perspective about school culture in schools-within- schools. The open-ended questions explore the relationship between school culture and achievement, attendance, discipline, teacher- student relationships, as well as any other areas that occur to me. An example of a question is: *From your opinion or perception, describe the overall atmosphere of the school.*

Voluntary Nature

Participation in this study would be voluntary and the participant has the right to terminate involvement at any time. Refusal to participate in the study or discontinuing

participation at any time will involve any penalty or loss of benefits that the participants would otherwise be entitled.

Anonymity

There is no anonymity due to the face to face interviews conducted in this study. However, the information gathered through the interviews will be used solely for purposes of analysis and the confidentiality of the interview and of the school district will be preserved. To maintain accuracy and confidentiality, each subject will be assigned a number code.

Confidential Records

The researcher and her mentor will review the raw data including all notes and recordings which will be saved in a secure, locked cabinet in the researcher's home for three years.

Risks and Discomforts

There are no anticipated risks or discomforts associated with participating in this study.

Benefits

The anticipated benefits from participating in this study include a greater understanding of school culture in the schools-within-schools downsized structure and possible changes in the leadership, management and policies governing this reform model.

Alternative Procedures

There are no alternative procedures or courses of treatment that might be advantageous for the subject as a result of this study.

Contact Information

Octavia A. Reid, the researcher and a student at Seton Hall University, may be contacted for answers to pertinent questions about the research and research subject's rights. In addition, the researcher's mentor and the Chairperson of Seton Hall University's IRB may also be contacted.

Octavia A. Reid, Researcher

Seton Hall University

Department of Education

400 South Orange Avenue

South Orange, New Jersey 07079

(973) 275-2723

Dr. Anthony Colella, Researcher's Mentor

Seton Hall University

Department of Education

400 South Orange Avenue

South Orange, New Jersey 07079

(973) 275-2723

Dr. Mary Ruzicka, Director Institutional Review Board

Seton Hall University

400 South Orange, Avenue

South Orange, New Jersey 07079

(973) 313-6314

Audio Tapes

Signing this Informed Consent grants the researcher permission for audio tapping. The subject has the right to review all or any portion of the tape and request that it be destroyed. Each tape recorded interview will be assigned a number code and the recordings will be analyzed and transcribed by the researcher. Raw data may also be reviewed by the researcher's mentor. The audio tape will be kept in a secure and locked cabinet in the researcher's home for a period of at least three years following termination of the research.

Copy of Informed Consent Form

A copy of the signed and dated Informed Consent will be given to the subject.

Subject or Authorized Representative

Date

Appendix D
Transcripts of Interviews

Small School Leader #1

Question 1.1 How long have you been a small school leader?

This is my 2nd year as a small school leader.

Question 12 How many years have you worked in an urban school district?

25 years.

Question 1.3 How many years have you worked in the field of education?

25 years.

The next set of questions will pertain to school climate.

Question 2.1 From your perspective; describe the overall atmosphere of the school.

The overall atmosphere of this school, I think would be kind of laid back, um.

There are students who want to come to school. I say about 60% of students want to come to school for an education. The other students want to be here, but it's more so for socialization and to have a safe place to go during the day. The staff that's here, again, their here for their comfort and safety, I don't feel that education is their number one purpose for being here, educating students, um. They have somewhat of a desire or have had in the past, but at this point, um they're just going through paces.

Question 2.2 Describe the three unique environments housed in this building.

The three different environments here, we have the school of creative expressions. The majority of that school is um special Ed students. Students who have, the mentality of those students and the air of those students is more of a family type, familiar setting, they're I believe comfortable, uh. The school of business is more so, the students there are are very laid back, uh. To me aren't conscientious in

terms of trying to follow rules. They feel everything should be very relaxed and comfortable for them. The third floor are students um the students have an air or have been told that they are the superior school because they are on the top floor, um and so you have three different levels. The first floor is pretty much geared towards, like I said there's more Special Ed students and the overall thing is that those are the kids who aren't that smart. The second floor are the students who are pretty much laid back and just do whatever. The third floor, their air is that they are the more elite group.

Question 2.3 What co-and extra curricular activities are available for students?

There's a number of athletic activities that are available for students and for the most part that was pretty much all that was available, was athletics. We are bringing in different types of things. They are doing the entrepreneurship now on the second floor, the third floor is doing more with robotics program and the junior ROTC is branching out into other areas. Creative expressions is doing more programs for the overall school- performances, bringing in people, um theatre, acting, music- those types of things, so there are a lot more I would say now available to students now than in the past.

What is the percentage of student involvement in those activities?

The percentage is low, um. I would say maybe, in looking at all the activities, if we talking about athletics and all the other ones that are coming in, I would say it is less that fifty percent of the students involved in it.

Question 2.4 What types of incidents occur in this school, and how frequently do they occur?

Well one of the major incidents are the pulling of the false fire alarms. In the past they had been occurring like daily, we narrowed that down over the past year or two, to maybe weekly there's there maybe a fire alarm, um. A couple of month, maybe, um. But that has greatly improved. There's some fighting. I wouldn't say it's any large number of fighting within the school itself. The average number of fights you may have are a couple you know or maybe one a day if that many. Other incidents would be teacher- student confrontations those happen a lot. And from my observation I would say that happens due to a lack of respect on both parts. Students feel that they are not respected, so they respond in a certain way. The teachers feel that they have been put down upon for so long that they have to respond in a negative way to students all the time and that causes a conflict.

The next set of questions pertains to student-teacher relationships.

Question 3.1 Characterize the relationships between adults and students in this school.

I would say the nurturing that needs to take place is not there yet. To be a small school you need to have teachers in place who have a small school mentality, knowing that their purpose is to nurture students. Their purpose is to do what's best for the students and I think a lot of times, their mentality is I have to cover myself, I will do what's best for me, what's more comfortable for me, because of some bad experiences I've had but In doing what you can do for students and making it better for them, in essence that makes it better for the teachers. When you put these things in place, when you put structures in place and you get firm and you are fair with they students and it's consistent, they respect that. They may not always like it or agree with it, but you know you'll get more respect and

more cooperation if you do that as opposed to coming in being hardcore, nasty, you don't care, xyz, then the kids are not going to respond to you.

Question 3.2 What activities are in place to foster interpersonal relationships with students?

There has been some training that has been given, not enough follow-up with that. As adults you know we tend to want to look out for the other adults and because of the union you know and them bonding together for their support, they feel that at all cost they need to be protected even if they are wrong, they are going to protect each other. There's been some classes, there's been some training given on diversity, resiliency, we did workshops on resiliency and how to deal with different things, we've given different books and literature on how to adapt and how to understand and so forth, but I don't think it's gone to where it should be.

Question 3.3 In your opinion, are students comfortable confiding in adults?

Very few. Students don't feel that adults are going to believe them. They really believe that whatever the adult says is what's going to go regardless of what happened or what they say, we will take the adults side.

Question 3.4 From your perspective, are teachers going the "extra mile" for kids?

Very few. Very few teachers do that. There are some that will, I mean they will go to their homes, give them money, clothes whatever's needed to help that kid get to school, be successful, get to a job interview, you know, get some extra help, they'll do it, but I say it's maybe ten percent of the staff that will go the extra mile.

Question 4.1 How do you feel about the academic standing of this school?

The academic the rigor here is not at the level it should be and again I think that's because of the lackadaisical attitude that the staff and the students have. I think if the staff's expectations were a lot higher that would increase. Their capacity level needs to increase also. They are just at a mediocre level. The staff needs to be pushed higher as well. Their capacity needs to be built so they can provide more for the students.

Question 4.2 In your opinion, are academic standards attacked rigorously?

No.

Question 4.3 What do you think about the level of higher order thinking skills demonstrated by students?

I think the students have the capability and if given those options, They are like I said we are pushing for more of that and I can see when the students are given those opportunities to do things on a higher level, they can do it, but it's not enough of it being done for it to be effective across the board.

These questions are in the category of attendance.

Question 5.1 Describe the attendance problems, if any that exist in this school.

Well the attendance problems, most of our students attend school but not on a regular basis I would say, um. There are a lot of home issues and things that happen. Transportation is the major issue because of the coding of a couple of schools and them having to redirect students here. Many of our students are on the bus line, um but they are not quite far enough away to get bus tickets, getting to and from school is an issue for them, and getting here on time is a major issue, because of them being on the buses. Again, that lackadaisical attitude which has

been allowed to permeate, so that when they get here, they get here. Teachers don't even start class on time because they know that they are not coming on time, you know which again just plays into that whole okay whatever attitude.

Question 5.2 What procedures are in place concerning attendance?

Well, we've assigned staff and paras who volunteer to contacting homes. We have the school messenger system that goes out; we send letters periodically for chronic tardiness. We do incentives for those who are here, special pushes during the year if they are here everyday. I personally go around and try to touch base with my students who I know when they are absent just say hey you weren't here yesterday, and they say I know, and I am like where was you... I let them know that they are missed and that I realized that you weren't here, where's your note, what's going on. So, we're trying to do more of that so that they are conscience of what they are supposed to be doing.

Small School Leader #2

Question 1.1 How long have you been a small school leader?

4 years.

Question 1.2 How many years have you worked in an urban school district?

18

Question 1.3 How many years have you worked in the field of education?

18

The next set of questions will pertain to school climate.

Question 2.1 From your perspective; describe the overall atmosphere of the school.

This year is a different year for us, but I would say the second and third years of a small schools were real good years and we could see changes in the kids taking ownership of their own small school, ah discipline was down, fights and all were down. This year being different because we had four small schools last year, one of them was dismantled and because of the way it was done, it's almost like we're starting over.

Question 2.2 Describe the three unique environments housed in this building.

We have an art school where those kids take um classes that are predominantly centered around the art theme. We have a science school and those students take a lot of science classes and they ah concentrate on ROTC and we have a business law and technology school where business is the focus so kids concentrate on entrepreneurialship and business type focuses.

Question 2.2a What are the environments like in those schools?

I think it depends on who's asking. In um the art school it's semi-real structured environment more discipline problems, a lot of fights and all because there is not time to mediate stuff. In the science school, it a more laid back environment, more controlled environment. In the business school, it's um probably different than everybody, there are kids out all the time, we have the, the business school has the best relationships on the campus, because we spent a lot of time building them, but you see kids out or in the office a lot, someone's dealing with their problems so that's the one that they think is the least controlled.

Question 2.3 What co-and extra-curricular activities are available for students?

Well it depends on the theme of the school and what the school's have there. A lot of schools have after school programs. In business, we have museum ambassadors' assistance program where kids can become ambassadors at the museum of art. They stay, they go one day a month from about eleven to five o'clock. We have an entrepreneurialship program that's the east city class that's built into the daily schedule but last year we ran it after school in the after school program where the kids were given fifty dollars for seed money and they go to either Sam's or Cosco's, come up with a business plan. They purchase an item, they turn around and sell the item and make profit, they do their business plan, they present it and there are monetary awards for that. We have after school tutoring; we have after school clubs, book clubs, chess clubs and stuff like that.

What is the percentage of student involvement in those activities?

I would say about eighty-five percent of the students are involved in activities. The seniors that leave early and go to work, they leave when they are academically finished here. There are a lot of kids that are responsible for younger siblings, so a few of them leave, but about eighty-five percent.

Question 2.4 What types of incidents occur in this school, and how frequently do they occur?

We've kind of been blessed. We don't have a whole lot of incidents. We'll have a fight maybe um once every maybe six, seven, eight weeks. Usually females, is always over misunderstandings, I thought you said something or you know I liked him, that kind of stuff. We mediate. I spend a lot of time on mediation, so I'll get the people that were involved in the fight, sit them in my office next to each other

and work it out and then I decide then what the disciplines going to be so when they come back we don't have to deal with the same situation again

The next set of questions pertains to student-teacher relationships.

Question 3.1 Characterize the relationships between adults and students in this school.

About ninety percent of my teachers have excellent relationships with the kids.

We worked on it so long and relationships were key to the starting of small schools, so they have very good relationships. It's nothing to go into a classroom and see the teachers cell phone number on they board or the teacher has given the cell phone number to the kids. They have the home numbers, they talk to them, they spend a lot of time on their free blocks, tutoring kids. There are few teachers that don't bond, they have relationships, but they don't go the extra mile, so they're not just the average teacher, but they're not giving their phone number out, which is understandable, they're not, if the kid approaches them then they're willing to help, but they won't approach a kid.

Question 3.2 What activities are in place to foster interpersonal relationships with students?

We started with advisories a couple of years ago. We don't have an actual advisory piece now that's in print where I could tell somebody we have advisories but since we started with advisories where each teacher had about fifteen students that they would advise or mentor to and they could run it any way they wanted to run it, that's where our chess club evolved from being at the school book club or the after school bible study club and we had after school fitness club and stuff.

Some of those same relationships have continued so the kids and the teachers still

have interaction and still have what they want to do. Some of them get theirs on the weekends but it's not etched in stone.

Question 3.3 In your opinion, are students comfortable confiding in adults?

Yes, I think sometimes they tell us more than they need to tell us, but I work real hard to make sure my students know that you can come in and tell me anything. If it has something to do with abuse I must report it, but if it's anything below that, then I am not going to report it. The kids know that the teachers in business are very nonjudgmental we are here to help and they also know that we treat them like and we let them know everyday that they are kids and they make mistakes and so everyday they're starting off fresh and new we're not holding grudges, we just want to see some developmental you know evolve in them and see them become responsible for their own education.

Question 3.4 From your perspective, are teachers going the "extra mile" for kids?

I would say ninety percent of them are. They do anything. We've collected for kids that have had deaths in the family. There are teachers who take kids home; there are teachers who pick kids up on the weekends. I take kids to church every Sunday and some of them I take to church as a disciplinary measure. I could suspend you or you go to church, because it's about making a kid responsible for their action and being able to see a change in the kid, so I would say yes.

The next set of questions deal with student achievement.

Question 4.1 How do you feel about the academic standing of this school?

The academic standing is a little shaky for me because this was not my school last year. I just took over. Mr. Leslie's school was left in tact my school was

dismantled and I have his school, his staff and one-third of my kids, but for the most part I think the academic standing is okay, it's not as well as I would like it to because we're starting back over from scratch, where I 'm still working on kids in the hallways and kids with their problems that they feel they need to share with me because I don't know, Mr. Leslie knew but he's gone so I would say average and that's not where I want it to be.

Question 4.2 In your opinion, are academic standards attacked rigorously?

Not as rigorously as they should be. There's still a few teachers that in the eighty minute block after thirty five minutes, kids are out in the hallways because they're finish with their work and I'm working with the teachers so that they know that this, the lesson should be continual and on going. If they're some kids that are finish with whatever it is you had planned for the day there should be some enrichment pieces that they could still do, there should be some intervention pieces, there's something where kids are not in the hallway and they can't be finish with your work, they shouldn't be finish 'til June ninth.

Question 4.3 What do you think about the level of higher order thinking skills demonstrated by students?

I think you'd be surprised. Students demonstrate sometimes more higher order thinking skills than the adults do and the students have been lead, what we did we worked on relationships and kids know that they can say what they need to say but it's all in the way they say it. That if there's something going on, they have the right to ask, they can start with the teacher, if it doesn't get resolved there, then they can bring it to me. Last year Mr. Leslie had kids that did petitions and

they did, because they didn't think they were getting what they needed to get in class so they all signed a petition and they took it to him and they went through a mock court trial with what they wanted and what they thought they weren't getting, so I think the students are really engaged. My ninth graders are not, they're new to high school and I spend a lot of time with them just getting to class on time, so they're not using any thinking skills.

The next set of questions deal with attendance.

Question 5.1 Describe the attendance problems, if any that exist in this school.

For the most part, a lot of these kids are responsible for younger siblings and stuff and a lot of stuff that needs to be done is not done in a timely manner or it's not done where it's feasible for the kids. Doctor appointments are made in the middle of the day has a lot to do with attendance. Parents will call and say release my child 'cause I need them to watch some younger siblings and all, our attendance is eighty-four percent which is not good at all, but (deleted) attendance was sixty-three percent the year before last, so we're improving but we're not where we need to be.

Question 5.2 What procedures are in place concerning attendance?

We just worked on this all out attendance program for the institute of business law and technology. We're going to start as early as the beginning of next week with some attendance incentives. The teachers want to do daily raffles and then we're working on, I have a traveling tourism culinary art person cooking meals for students that have met the attendance qualifications, coming to school everyday for two weeks on time, going to all their classes on time. We also have, we're

working on taking two hundred kids that have demonstrated consistency in their attendance to see the movie Freedom Writers and then we're looking at purchasing one hundred copies of the book that they used as something to bring them back towards literacy, but also to give them some kind of incentive for coming to school.

Small School Leader #3

Question 1.1 How long have you been a small school leader?

This is my second year at (deleted).

Question 1.2 How many years have you worked in an urban school district?

20, 21

Question 1.3 How many years have you worked in the field of education?

Same time, 20, 21 years.

The next set of questions deal with school climate.

Question 2.1 From your perspective; describe the overall atmosphere of the school.

Overall, I think it's a positive atmosphere. When you say school do you mean when you say, small school or large the campus. Overall I think it's a positive, we have the benefit of being a sports powerhouse so that helps things and for the most part I think the teachers engage in the kids, but like probably other high schools in Cleveland, there's a number of hall walkers who probably cause us to spend a disproportion amount of time on them, the hall walkers and the disruptive kids

What about your particular school that you oversee?

Well I have first time ninth graders, so we have a lot of middle school behavior that hasn't been extinguished and, so um we seem to have a lot of small disruptive behavior that ties me up more than I would like, um most of the teachers in our small school really like working with the younger kids. I think if they had an opportunity to move to one of the other schools they'd probably say no, I'd say the majority maybe like seventy percent, so I think that's a positive. So by in large I think that's a good core group of teachers and we all started together this bridge academy concept started when I got here last year and a number of those people it was there first time at (deleted) also so I think we are sort of parallel, we're growing together.

Question 2.2 Describe the four unique environments housed in this building.

Okay, well we have the school of science which stresses of course science and math. The school of leadership which I believe um, I want to say that they practice leadership but I think it was leadership and teaching, but I really don't know too much about that particular school. Arts, school of arts, renaissance school of fine arts they focus on the performing arts as well as I believe writing and theatre although I don't even know if we have a theatre teacher at our school. The bridge academy focuses on ninth graders, first time ninth graders and what we do there is we have a minimum number of electives, we try to overload them with core classes so that if they pass everything they'll have seven credits after the first grade year which puts them well on their way into their tenth grade program.

Question 2.3 What co-and extra curricular activities are available for students?

Okay, we have a ninth grade school, the Bridge Academy on the third floor and then on the second floor we have two small schools, the School of Arts and the school of Leadership, Health and Wellness and the first floor we have School of Science. We do have some classes that are shared on all three floors.

Question 2.3 What co-and extra curricular activities are available for students?

We have quite a few extra curricular activities, um basketball, football, softball, baseball, chess, tennis, and volleyball.

Tell me the non athletic.

The non athletic would be like the chess, the debate team. We have an ICE program that (deleted) would be able to explain. It originated with the school of arts and we also have a YES program that originated in the school of science that is available to students on the campus, in which we did receive a grant and that program is to improve for the youth etiquette and school spirit.

What percentage of student involvement are in the activities?

The majority of the students in the building participate in some activity or others whether it's the honor society maybe or student council or the mediators for the school, so I would say at least eight five percent of the students participate in one or another.

Question 2.4 What types of incidents occur in this school, and how frequently do they occur?

Okay um, the incidents that we might have maybe an incident with young ladies or young men, which may have stemmed from the middle school to here or we

may have an incident if something happens in the community that may have spilled back over into the school, but we handle them right away.

How frequently do they occur?

I can't say out flat the frequency because if there's a party on the weekend and they may occur at anytime. The one's that we have here at the school, at the beginning of the school were more frequent. But now we don't have that many incidents.

The next set of questions deal with student-teacher relationships.

Question 3.1 Characterize the relationships between adults and students in this school?

We have an outstanding relationship with the adults and the students in the school because every committee has students on them, so we get the input from students and that's a requirement here that we must have students and parents on our committees, so the relationship is really great. We have teachers that are tutoring students after school. If there are incidents with something happening, a student will come in, and then either an administrator or a teacher know what's going on out there in the streets, because of the relationship that we have here. We have developed a very great relationship in the building.

Question 3.2 What activities are in place to foster interpersonal relationships with students?

Okay, um we have student leadership teams um for the district and for the building. Okay, we have students who are in programs that I mentioned earlier and that brings a closer relationship, the ICE program has really really been outstanding with getting better relationships with the parents, students and staff.

All of the extra curricular activities really involve staff and students and we support, the staff supports all of the activities for the students.

Question 3.3 In your opinion, are students comfortable confiding in adults?

Oh yes, oh yes, um especially for school fights. If there's a problem with the student at home or here in the school they have no problem either coming to me, their principal or to one of their teachers.

The next set of questions deal with student achievement.

Question 3.4 From your perspective are teachers going the "extra mile" for kids?

Yes and I'm speaking now for the campus and for the school of science. We have teachers who have um volunteered to do tutoring to make sure that these students are passing the OGT. Now last year, the teacher who tutored students for math, every one of those students passed the math proficiency oh um the OGT. Yes they are going the extra mile and the students know that teachers are willing to help them.

What percentage of teachers would you say are going the extra mile?

For the school of science, ninety-five percent.

The next set of questions deal with academics.

Question 4.1 How do you feel about the academic standing of this school?

The standards are set high here in the school, they're set high and the students know the expectations because we let them know and if you will notice outside of this room, we have a mission for the school of science, those students who have excelled and one thing that's beginning to catch the eye of lot of people who is seeing what's posted is for the tenth graders, if you will notice all of those with

four points and above and then below are the young men, so deep concentration has been put into place to help the young men excel. The young women are doing it and now we're working on the young men, and I want you to take a look at those when you go out there.

Question 4.2 In your opinion, are academic standards attacked rigorously?

Yes, absolutely.

Question 4.3 What do you think about the level of higher order thinking skills demonstrated by students?

I would say in the school of science it is outstanding. We have students who participate in a high tech program. They attend Tri-C and Cleveland State. We have students with 5.0 averages for the first quarter, highly intelligent students. We have students who plan to go into engineering and they are taking the steps that are necessary for them to do those things.

The next set of questions deal with attendance

Question 5.1 Describe the attendance problems, if any that exist in this school.

There is an attendance problem. Students do attend school that are tardy to school and that is a problem, but it's a reason for the problem. A lot of the students work and it tends to make them late for school. We are letting them know that they must set their priorities, but that's a priority for them to work after school. Quite a few are tardy.

Question 5.2 What procedures are in place concerning attendance?

We have an attendance committee. We give incentives to the homeroom with perfect attendance, those are two of the things that we do. We also have pizza

parties for the students with perfect attendance. The school of science and technology is the best school and best stands for Biomedicine, Engineering, Science and Technology-BEST and we are the best school on the campus.

Campus Administrator #1

Question 1.1 How long have you been a campus administrator?

I have been the principal for four, four and a half years; I was gone for practically four or five months for the 2004-2005 school year when we first made the transition to small schools.

Question 1.2 How many years have you worked in an urban school district?

32.

Question 1.3 How many years have you worked in the field of education?

32.

The next set of questions deal with school climate.

Question 2.1 From your perspective, describe the overall atmosphere of the school.

I think the overall atmosphere here is um at this school is very pleasant, there's an air of anxiety to a certain extent with the athletic accomplishments that occurred this year, but I think the climate here is very conducive to education and learning environment.

Question 2.2 Describe the four unique environments housed in this building.

There are four small schools and um unfortunately, two of them are sharing one floor. The third floor is primarily for the Bridge Academy which is for first time ninth graders only. The second floor is shared by the Renaissance School of Fine

Arts and the School of Leadership, Health and Wellness and then the first floor is for the School of Science and Technology. When the first, the very first year of the transformation into four small schools, it was designed so that each one of the four small schools would have their own space, their own staffing from the principal to the students because of the reduction in personnel with the district. That didn't happen and it's still not as pure as we would like for it to be to this day, because we have some crossing over, if you will, where students from the school of leadership have to come to the first floor to take classes with some teachers that are assigned to the school of science and things like that. The only pure school right now is the Bridge Academy for the ninth graders on the third floor. They do have their own principal and an assistant principal, they have their own guidance counselor, secretary. All of their classes are on the third floor.

Question 2.3 What co-and extra curricular activities are available for students?

Oh gosh, um besides the usual sports, we have a French club, we have foreign language, it's a combination of French and Spanish, foreign language club, there's student council, um the honor society, um there's a journalism group, their name escapes me right now, but they publish a small paper that's usually a one pager, front and back, that's done with the yearbook staff advisor (deleted). There's a robotics club that meets after school for those students who have a interest in robotics. There's a chess club, there's a JROTC, that does the drilling and branches off, plus the high steppers and the cheerleaders and those groups and the athletic teams. We're trying to and there's a group called ICE. They are one of our newest extra curricula's that's opened for students from all four small schools

and it's a character behavior group and that's something that was started last year by the principal with the Renaissance School of Fine Arts and it was actually started for some behavior modification because we recognized the need for some attitude adjustments that needed to be made amongst the students. It also open to the staff members. It's a volunteer group so staff and students have an informal atmosphere. They can get together and discuss whatever it is they would like to discuss the staff takes off the teacher hat and the students can just be upfront and honest with them if there's something troubling them, from well I don't like it when I walk into classes and the teachers seem to be unprepared or the teacher wants to say well I don't like hearing all the profanity in the hallway as I go from point A to point B. It was a very informal and very worthwhile initiative that started now.

What percentage of student involvement do you have in these activities?

Across the campus, I'm going to say probably about fifty to seventy percent of the students. I just encourage students, even new students coming into the building, for example I had a parent that came in yesterday with twin daughters, and one daughter had been involuntarily assigned to us and she wanted to bring the other daughter so they are not in two separate schools, so I like to talk to those students that are coming in on special transfers or that are interested just to let them know this is what is expected of you if you are going to be a student here. When I explain to the parent that, I also encourage the students to get involved in something beyond just their classes, because I firmly believe that those students that do have an extra, any sort that they're interested in, those are students that

will do better academically in school. They have good attendance, they have better attitudes and just more well rounded than the average student that only comes to school, goes to classes and go home. I encourage that.

Question 2.4 What types of incidents occur in this school, and how frequently do they occur?

Incidents in terms of behavior, we have our share of fights. It's more than I would like to have, I'm trying to even, peer mediation is another group too, try to get the students to understand that violence is not the answer, any disagreement that you may have. Um basically, I think that even the fights are minimal. If there's a dance on Friday we can usually know that on Monday morning that there will be some carry over if there was anything that happened at the dance. We've had, this year, um a couple staff assaults and they have been basically more verbal in nature than a physical nature that even bothers me too. I'd like to have an attitude of respect, mutual respect. It's not something that you take for granted. Teachers if you want to be respected then you have to show respect. At a high school level, these kids can become very sensitive, well I didn't like the way she spoke to me or she didn't have to put her hands on me or he didn't have to do this and I hug the kids all the time. I put my hands on you so what's the problem? Yeah but I know you love me, well your teachers love you too and sometimes we have to use tough love to show you that, come on let's get it together. Um the verbal assaults have been more in nature than the physical assaults. What other incidents have we had. Just yesterday the first, student that had an active warrant because security was there with the administrator he chose to go out of a window instead of trying

to go through three individuals and go out the door because he insist that he's not going to be incarcerated again, but that's a first time and I just couldn't believe it myself when I went to see actually what happened. I'd like to say no more that the average urban school, that's been about the most unusual thing that has happened here in my ten years that I've been here at (deleted).

With the occasional fights and everything how frequently, weekly maybe there's an incident, every month you have an incident?

I would say every, maybe, three, four weeks.

The next set of questions deal with student-teacher relationships.

Question 3.1 Characterize the relationships between adults and students in this school?

For the most part, I think it is an atmosphere of love. We just believe at (deleted) in nurturing kids and smothering them to let them know you're loved, I tell them via the PA, on a daily basis when I give accolades to my sensational seniors or my jamming juniors or my super sophomores or my fantastic freshmen. I let them know that you are very much loved and have an enjoyable evening and I just like to repeat that. I start the year, each year before the staff meets their kids on that following Wednesday with a song by Yolanda Adams called "What about the children" and I have a paraprofessional that sings the song for me because I want to really, really give them the full gist of why I do that, plus I give the staff the words because so often you can get aught up in the melody of a song, that you loose the message, so I give them the words so they can read along as she sings along, but it just speaks to the fact, that had there not been somebody that loved and cared about me, where we would be today, so I want them to know that this

community is sending us their very best and it's our job as the educational leaders of this building to do like wise. I ask that they take a picture of their children, grandchildren, significant other, somebody that they love and care about and place it on their desk and each day before they start their lessons for the day, ask themselves, is this lesson good enough for this individual sitting on my desk okay and if it's not then you need to go back and rethink it, because if it's not good enough for somebody that you love, then it's not good enough for those individuals that are going to be sitting before you when that bell rings. I'd like to have just that kind of rapoire, just kind of permeate throughout the building. Does it happen in every classroom of course not, but I keep trying. Okay I keep trying to let those individuals know that may not buy into that philosophy, that perhaps (deleted) is not the place for you and you need to let me help you go, because I don't want you here if you can't come in here on a daily basis with that kind of knowledge and that kind of atmosphere within in your classroom.

Question 3.2 What activities are in place to foster interpersonal relationships with students?

Besides the extra curricular clubs and activities and what not, because I think that that is one of the more, probably whether a more positive ways of getting that because even as a coach, as an advisor, you get into what your doing and in getting into what you're doing you have to get to know the kids, you have to develop some relationships and that is the key to any successful activity, club, team or what have you. If you don't have a relationship with those individuals that are a part of what you're doing, then you're not going to be successful. I'd

like to use our sports. I'd like to use our extra curriculars, I'd like to use our clubs and other classroom projects that you might have going on, use that as your tool or your strategy to develop relationships because that's what it's all about, kids know that you care you can get them to do just about anything.

Question 3.3 In your opinion, are students comfortable confiding in adults?

Some adults, some adults, yes. Sometimes they tell you some things you wish they hadn't told you but yeah, they're comfortable but again they pick and choose those people that they do report to, not across the board.

Question 3.4 From your perspective are teachers going the "extra mile" for kids?

Some of them, some of them. Those that are truly genuine and sincere about what they are doing, they'll go the extra mile.

The next set of questions deal with student achievements?

Question 4.1 How do you feel about the academic standing of this school?

I don't like it. I think there is um lots and lots and lots of room for improvement. I took these charts, that I had a math teacher, my math department chair as a matter of fact, do these graphs for me, and this is what we used to kind of fill out where we were, where we are but where we'd like to be and these are the charts that are going to be enlarged, to large poster size laminated, and as we are preparing second semester for this OGT, this is what the kids are going to be, these are posted this size in every classroom. One for the tenth grade, eleventh grade, one for attendance. This is what we're going to use on a daily basis, have we reached our goal yet you know, what are you doing to help us reach our goal and especially since we know that this AYP is based on tenth grade, our tenth graders

and are seniors are going to be the group that we are going to truly, truly just kind of target for AYP purposes second semester, but academically no. I tell people all the time when we have visitors coming in here that when you talk about (deleted), when you hear (deleted) mentioned first thing that comes to mind are sports. I want to be academic, the same level academically as we are with our sports. If we are on the map around this nation, for everyone knows about Glenville because of our sports, I want the academic side to be right up there with it, if it's the same that we have the eligibility requirement for the sports because it then keeps those athletes that may only want to be here for football, play basketball, run track or what have you because we have that 2.0 with no F's as an eligibility requirement, it forces them to keep those grades at least at 2 points, that's only average, that's a C. We want them beyond that. We have students that are going to division one schools and trying to get them to understand that the higher your GPA, that gives you a little wiggle room for the ACT, but if you have a 2.0 GPA, then you'll have to score in the upper twenty's to be able to get a D one scholarship, I don't care if you have the talent of a Lebron James, you need to get in those books, go to that study table and handle your business.

Question 4.2 In your opinion, are academic standards attacked rigorously?

Not as rigorously as they should be. Every teacher should have standards posted. Every teacher should have a goal and objective posted so that when the child walks through the door they are aware of what we're going to be working on today and what our objective is, at the end of that lesson you should be able to refer back and be able to say have we reached our objective for today. It's not

being done across the board and I know that and unfortunately we have not gotten, we haven't gotten that kind of embedded in everyone's head. That should be standard procedure when you are preparing your lesson. You start with whatever the objective is whatever your standards are you are going to be working on, how are you going to reach that objective, that does not take away or affect your creativity whatever, because the activities can be as creative as you want them to be, as long as you achieve your objective.

Question 4.3 What do you think about the level of higher order thinking skills demonstrated by students?

They could be higher and should be higher, there are too many instances where kids are not being challenged and when I look at the creativity that the students use to do the negative things and try to get them to understand that if you just kind of redirect that same creativity into your academics, just imagine where you could be. It's just not there.

The next set of questions deal with attendance.

Question 5.1 Describe the attendance problems, if any that exist in this school.

We disconnected our homeroom from second block in an effort to have a stand alone homeroom that was strictly by grade level so that we know exactly how many ninth grade homerooms we have, how many tenth grade homerooms we have, how many eleventh grade homerooms, how many twelfth grade homerooms. Before this two years ago we connected it to the second block so that it minimized the movement from second block class to homeroom so that our

homeroom attendance was more, was better because it eliminated two bells, a bell to end the block and to start homeroom so if the kids are moving around less, chances of you saying well it's just homeroom so let me just duck down here to the vending machine and get a drink and if I make it, I make it. Kids were not attending homeroom as faithfully as would have like them to be there because they looked at that as their recess time, and um we said well on the other hand, when it was time to take the OGT, because the classes, you may have been in French class for example, in that French class you may have been a tenth grader, I'm an eleventh grader, but there may have been a senior in there taking French 1 or French 2, and when we were trying to monitor all of our tenth graders to be sure they were all tested, it made it very hard and when we thought we had them all, then we got the data from the state in August and they're saying no,no,no,no,no, you didn't reach dadadadad, and we're saying well wait a minute according to our records we did. Well it's not according to your records it's according to their records, so we said well fine this year what we'll do is, we'll disconnect it again we'll have a second homeroom attendance sheet and as the student takes the test, the homeroom teacher would have already sent the attendance folder in for homeroom attendance, but now we have another attendance sheet strictly for test and we're going to bubble in the test everyday that (deleted) is there to take the test that week, it should be a blackened circle to say that you were there. Now if I get that sheet on Friday and I see a circle blackened in for Monday, one for Wednesday, one for Thursday, and one for Friday, then I'll know on Tuesday you missed the math test, so I need to find you

and make sure you sit down and you take that math test, because I already have proof here from the homeroom teacher, you weren't there. We're approving our attendance trying to get teachers to call home, if you're a homeroom teacher, call if your student in your homeroom has missed 2 or more consecutive days, call home because on a high school level, there's so many kids that look at homeroom as not important because it's not a grade, it's time when the announcements come on, so it's chill time, so you get marked absent when in essence you're out there at your locker, you're down at the vending machine and we're constantly trying to impress upon them, you're costing me money. If you're not here, then that's money that our school is not receiving because the district is not receiving it so it won't be a part of our budget here to do the things that you want us to do to make this place more enjoyable for you, so you need to be in homeroom, to get credit for being here. Jobs are looking at your achievements and your attendance. They're saying if you can't go to school, then you probably will not go to work either and who do you think wants to hire (deleted) if they can see that you missed forty days of school in one year.

Question 5.2 What procedures are in place concerning attendance?

We have an attendance committee meeting at 2:15 today and we want to come up with some additional strategies and I told the chairperson who is a secretary, sharing this committee, (deleted), I said what I want you to do also at today's meeting, there are students on the committee, but these are students that you don't worry about anyway, they're honor roll students, I said we need to get some at risk students on the committee, and I don't want just anybody, I want those

students that you know for the most part are good students, but they have just made some poor decisions, but these are students that can contribute to what it is that we can do as a school to motivate, inspire you to be here more often so that you're not on the suspension list, so that you don't want to walk the halls. What can we do? What kind of incentives do you think students would like to have in place as a motivator? What can we suggest to the teachers because I firmly believe that if something exciting, and interesting and really engaging is going on inside the classroom then you're not going to have students cutting your class., an engaging lesson is what disciplines a classroom and if you don't have something going on that is of interest to me that I can relate to then I'm going to be there to learn it , but don't have me walking out of class talking about Shakespeare and you can't show me why is that important that I know about somebody that died ions, years ago, so kids have go to be ready to be engaged, that got to be prepared, but you've got to be that person that take that lead on what can I do to make this place a place where kids want to be in here. When you look at the print out, I get the reports that show me what is the correlation between achievement and attendance for each teacher by class and I want to have a conversation with you if I'm looking at you have a kid, you have a classroom say block 1 and eighty percent of your kids are there, yet sixty percent of them are failing, that tells me something, so I want to have a conversation with you to find out, you know what (deleted), something is not right with this picture if sixty percent are failing and you have eighty percent coming, this sixty percent is doing the same thing as the twenty percent that never walked in your door. What's up with that? What are you

doing in there that half of your kids that are there, sixty percent of your kids, that's half of your kids, what's going on in your classroom, don't tell me well they just so ill prepared when they get here that I can't even go on with chapter 10 because they don't know what's happening in chapter 1 or 5. Take them from where they are and you make up that difference, maybe you don't need to be on chapter 10 maybe you need to go back to chapter 1. If I'm lost in chapter 1 what do you think I care about chapter 10, what can you tell me about chapter 10, if I don't know what's happening in 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9, so you can't always be so concerned about I got to get this covered, I got to get this covered. You meet the kids where they are and take them where they need to be if that's allowed, but at least be able to show some progress. If I came in here and start blaming what the middle school teachers didn't do and the middle school want to say what the elementary school didn't do. Stop blaming the person before you and just kindly take me as I am and help me to move forward, because I bet if we look in your closet, you may find out that there are some participants that you might have not been so prepared in as you could have been and should've been either, 'cause you didn't come here grown, you came here one you were fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, and I bet you didn't always do what you were supposed to do, but somebody took the time to encourage you and inspire you and look at where you are today. It's a whole lot of geniuses walking around in here, standing in here as educated persons, teachers, counselors, principals, whole lot of geniuses, but if you're not going to share that and be able to help these kids, then what do I need you for? You may as well go and find some other profession and I tell the teachers, I feel

that some of you came here in this profession for the wrong reasons. You came in here because what other job can you start year one and have two and a half summers off, I mean two and a half months in the summer off, two weeks vacation at Christmas, a week at Easter, what other job? Though we may complain about salaries, I mean let's keep it real, you're starting at a nice little salary and when you look at the days that we work for the pay come on as an administrator it's different but teaching, when you know if you don't wish to take an extra curricular as an add on, you don't have to, your day can start at 7:50, end at 2:30, if you don't want to do night school, extended day, summer school, none of those extras you don't have to you will still get a paycheck all year long. If you don't want to work any weekends, you don't have to, you don't want to work any vacations you don't have to, not such a bad profession is it? If you don't love kids, if you're not concerned about whether or not they know more when they leave you, than they did when they first got there, you're in the wrong profession. Find something to do and stop pimping my babies okay, because that's exactly what you're doing. Every other Friday you don't have a problem with direct pay or coming to get your paycheck. You don't have a problem, but some of you need to back up to the secretary and when you go to the bank hold your head down because you know you haven't really earned it and I don't need to tell you who you are. I know and you know just keep it real with yourself but please find something else to do and stop hurting these babies.

Campus Administrator #2

Question 1.1 How long have you been a small school leader?

I'm not a small school leader, I'm a campus administrator. I've been a campus administrator for actually two years, two and a half years.

Question 1.2 How many years have you worked in an urban school district?

22.

Question 1.3 How many years have you worked in the field of education?

22.

The next set of questions deal with school climate.

Question 2.1 From your perspective, describe the overall atmosphere of the school.

Ah, the atmosphere of the school is ah, I think that by it being on a ninety minute block, we have a good educational atmosphere. As the day goes on, it becomes a little um more hectic but I would say C-.

Question 2.2 Describe the three unique environments housed in this building.

Ah, the Academy of Creative Expressions is a school based on creative expressions, dance, music, and writing, that's one. The School of Business Law and Technology ah based on business and law curriculum, it has a little higher computer based programs available in it and the other school is the School of Applied Science and Technology. Applied Science is building their curriculum a little more. Our Robotics Team is housed in that program. They have a forensics class; again they're building the program.

As far as school climate goes, how would you describe the environment?

Give me a little bit more of what you mean.

Are they safe? Are they manageable?

They are safe environments; um we're in an urban setting I would say in the heart of the city and there's a lot going on around us. This is an area for lack of a better term where gangs are very strong and we work very hard to keep that outside of the school, but it is a challenge, ah but for the most part I would say that the school is safe. Safe in terms of 2007 not safe in terms of 1950's you see what I'm saying.

Question 2.3 What co-and extra curricular activities are available for students?

Ah, we have all of the athletic programs including swimming, we have golf, we have boys and girls' basketball, volleyball, softball, we also have high-steppers, cheerleaders a variety of programs.

What percentage of the student body are involved in those activities?

I would say a small percent, maybe about twenty percent.

Question 2.4 What types of incidents occur in this school, and how frequently do they occur?

Ah, for the most part, the types of incidents that we have are students not attending their class, smoking in the restrooms, um we haven't had a lot of major incidents, we have had some issues with students being physical towards teachers, but level 2 misbehaviors. We've had a couple of incidents involving guns but nothing in which a gun has gotten into the school. Luckily, we've had parents who do inform us of anything that's going on so that we can just make any precautions necessary.

How frequently do they occur? Weekly. Two times a week, once a month.

I'd say a higher level once every two months, the lower level of incidents, the class cutting and those kinds of things I'd say on a daily basis. I would say we

have a fight a couple times a week um and that's inside the school as I said outside of the school there are also issues.

The next set of questions deal with student-teacher relationships.

Question 3.1 Characterize the relationships between adults and students in this school.

I would say compared to the comprehensive high school, ah the relationships between adults and students in the small schools are higher. The teachers do know the students better. They have stronger relationships than generally what you would expect in a comprehensive high school. I would say of the attributes of small schools, student and adult relationships are the area that we can say is strongest. We haven't done any data on it, but that is a stronger area.

Question 3.2 What activities are in place to foster interpersonal relationships with students?

The school of Applied Science and Technology, they have the advisory period, all of them have, all three schools have some form of the advisory period, but that is the specific um activity that's done to foster that, also we are on the ninety minute block, so that students and teachers spend a much greater amount of time together.

Question 3.3 In your opinion, are students comfortable confiding in adults?

Ah, I think that some are, some are not, um there is kind of um a code of ethics that I will say that students especially in the urban district, ah nobody wants to be a snitch, so if they do it there has to be some anonymity in it, but there is some confiding of a personal and other types of issue.

Question 3.4 From your perspective are teachers going the "extra mile" for kids?

Some are, some are. I think that the teachers that are they're the teachers that did it when we were a comprehensive school too. I don't think that the small school is attributed to that. I think there are teachers that go the extra mile, they do in what ever setting they're in.

The next set of questions deal with student achievements.

Question 4.1 How do you feel about the academic standing of this school?

Not happy with it. We have had just very small incremental gains. We haven't gone backwards, except maybe in one or two areas, but we have had some small academic gain, but nowhere near where we need to be.

Question 4.2 In your opinion, are academic standards attacked rigorously?

I think that we do um attack them rigorously, but I don't think everybody has the same focus. um I think the administrators um do try to keep the focus on academic rigor and academic standards, but you have ah teachers of all different knowledge backgrounds, experienced backgrounds and capabilities so it's not a unified force that you have working vigorously at it.

Question 4.3 What do you think about the level of higher order thinking skills demonstrated by students?

I would say some teachers in some classrooms they do a real good job at working and incorporating activities that promote higher order thinking skills, again teachers are at different levels of their understanding of higher order thinking skills, so we have pockets of teachers who work at it vigorously, but overall in all of the schools, I think that the level in the building is very low, very low.

The next set of questions deal with attendance.

Question 5.1 Describe the attendance problems, if any that exist in this school.

I would just say that the main attendance problems have a lot to do with the social economic status of our students. Many of our students are in homes where that don't have strong parenting and so that um there isn't a high emphasis on attending school and attending in an appropriate manner. We have parents who keep their kids out of school because they said someone was picking on them, keep them out because they needed them to stay home to watch a younger brother or sister. They let them stay out of school, for just trivial reasons and parents or guardians condone it, so I would say overall that's the main emphasis of our problem and another part of it I would say to is poor health. We do have some students that are diabetic; we have students that are overweight. A lot of our students also have some health issues as well, so I would say that's attributed to it too.

Question 5.2 What procedures are in place concerning attendance?

All of the schools have some form of calling home. We have an attendance liaison that is assigned to the school who is supposed to, goes to homes, deals with truant students, those kind of things, and then there is the procedure when students return, they're supposed to bring a note and making sure there's parent contact, also the notes are really important and phone calls so that if we are aware that there is some kind of an issue, like a health issue, or something like can give him some assistance in getting some help. We have a number of um support agencies that work through the school; this is a, I am trying to think of the term, health

targeted school by the health department so there are a number of health related programs in the school to assist.

Campus Administrator #3

Question 1.1 How long have you been a campus administrator?

This is my first year as a campus administrator.

And a small school leader?

I was a small school leader for two years.

Question 1.2 How many years have you worked in an urban school district?

This is my 28th year in Cleveland Municipal School District.

Question 1.3 How many years have you worked in the field of education?

28 years.

The next set of questions deal with school climate.

Question 2.1 From your perspective, describe the overall atmosphere of the school.

Uh, it's one in transition, we've had a number of neighborhood issues, where students have had to worry about what kind of activities is going to happen between one group of students and another group of students, and uh we're beginning to move away from that by eliminating some of those neighborhood conflicts and uh becoming a more positive school climate. Uh, you can start to hear a little bit of talk you know about education among students and not simply the gossip about what's happening in the neighborhood.

Question 2.2 Describe the three unique environments housed in this building.

Uh, three unique environments, well each small school in itself has it's own personality, uh and a lot of that is reflected in each small school leader, uh but the student body in general has it's own personality, I think in general are students are pretty good kids, it's my believe that kids are kids pretty much no matter where they come from. Our kids are looking for some structure and when you give it to them, they tend to really respond. Our staff members, I've had the luxury of being in this building for twenty, twenty two years, uh so I know the staff really well and I know their strengths and I know their weaknesses. Some of the people that are new can't see where I'm going with some things, uh they see the weaknesses and you're not going to change those overnight, you got to work them and bring them along., but I think we're making positive, we've gotten a lot of positive feedback from staff. Staff attendance is much better. Our third environment I would say the parents and the community uh. It's interesting, we get a lot of verbal support from the community and most parents, however you don't see many and that's somewhat frustrating. I brought the alumni back in to get them involved. They have an office now that they didn't have before. We're doing some more joint things getting them back involved with activities that are going in this school so we're trying to develop the community-parent alumni support and make it a more visible entity.

Question 2.3 What co-and extra curricular activities are available for students?

Uh, we have the regular athletic programs, uh cross country, volleyball, football, uh basketball for boys and girls, wrestling, um baseball, softball, track, soccer, golf, had a swimming team but we were without a coach so we didn't have a team

this past year, we had a fencing club, but it was not an official sanctioned sport so actually that was not active this year either. Our intramural program has been pretty non existent, I've been working on that so at the moment there're no intramural activities. We did have a chess club, uh but the sponsor gave that up, and by the time we identified a new sponsor, basically it was over.

What non- athletic clubs do you have?

We have a robotics team, we have students involved in the East City program, choir, instrumental music, although our instrumental music teacher is currently out on a leave and looking to go to a K-8, I'm just trying to catch employee services to agree to swap somebody out and they're fighting that. We were without an instrumental program last year and was trying to rebuild that.

What percentage of the student body are involved in those activities?

I would say maybe twenty percent of the students are actively involved.

Question 2.4 What types of incidents occur in this school, and how frequently do they occur?

Uh, the incidents I eluded to earlier involve um some of the neighborhood, different housing projects uh kids who claim this project or that and they have their differences. We've had two big fights in the building. We had one fight outside. We've typically been able to break those up. We get support from the district and safety and security. Um, as a result, we've had a number of expulsions because the district has taken a hard line stance against the violent behavior and that has helped. Those are typically the only real serious incidents that we have and fortunately we've been able to keep things pretty much under control. If there

are things going on in the neighborhood we do have people out there that will let us know, give us a heads up so we can try to stop things before they get started.

The next set of questions deal with student-teacher relationships.

Question 3.1 Characterize the relationships between adults and students in this school.

I would say overall the relationship involving students is a positive relationship.

The teachers are attempting to do whatever they can to help students be successful. That's the position that the administration is taking, we're encouraging teachers to be like, almost to be coaches, coaches have a special relationship with their athletes to bring them along, to develop them, make them better and that's what we want our teacher to be, so we've been working on that. I think we have our incidents, occurrences where teachers and students don't get along, I think you can count those on one hand, but I think generally teachers and students have a good relationship.

Question 3.2 What activities are in place to foster interpersonal relationships with students?

Uh, we try to encourage uh, we have student council, senior class advisory board. The advisory period itself, uh we're fighting; we want to implement something along those lines but the way our schedule works and the number of assignments for teachers needs to be worked out with the union, but uh there's not a formal avenue for student input other than student council and the senior class.

Question 3.3 In your opinion, are students comfortable confiding in adults?

Uh, I think it's not a simple yes or no. Uh, I would think that the percentages of students who are willing to confide is growing as they see that we are working to

eliminate the problems and make this a place where they are able to come and learn, so when they see problems they are more likely to come forward and let us know what's going on. There's still cases, it just doesn't make sense for students not to say something if they don't say something.

Question 3.4 From your perspective are teachers going the "extra mile" for kids?

I would say the vast majority of our teachers are going the extra mile. We have those who are doing a great job. Kids want to be in those classes, are not late to those classes, then you have a few that, uh, the teacher is doing their, operating by the letter but not necessarily the spirit, doing what they have to on paper and we're working to improve those situations and asking in some cases to remove those people who are not doing what we need to, what we think we needs to happen to help the student's success and relationships.

The next set of questions deal with student achievements.

Question 4.1 How do you feel about the academic standing of this school?

I'm not happy with it, we have work to do just looking at our state report card and the number of indicators that we meet, we've met zero indicators on the state report card. With regards to attendance, graduation rate and the Ohio Graduation Test, we've been pounding teachers with what we need to do to get ourselves into continuous improvement to bring students along, get them successful. Uh, they have the materials, uh they've been coached on how to use the materials, the small school principals are monitoring the use of those materials, making sure that our students are getting the instruction that they need in order to demonstrate that academic, improved academic status.

Question 4.2 In your opinion, are academic standards attacked rigorously?

Not rigorously enough, just like the previous question, we're pounding staff with standard based instruction; lesson plans are supposed to reflect that, the instruction should be reflected in those. We want students to be able to go into a classroom and students should be able to say what standard they're working at, how this relates to the OGT, why it's important.

Question 4.3 What do you think about the level of higher order thinking skills demonstrated by students?

Uh, because I have a long history here, I would say that it is improving, along with the academic standing of the school, I'm not yet pleased with where are kids are at, but as far as the standard based instruction, we've been pounding teachers to building higher order thinking skills with Blooms Taxonomy, to help them to be able to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, think critically and be able to make good decisions utilizing these skills.

The next set of questions deal with attendance.

Question 5.1 Describe the attendance problems, if any that exist in this school.

Uh, the biggest problem is tardiness, and from what I understand it's almost universal across our district and maybe beyond our district. Along with everything else we're working on trying to improve that. The attendance has been about eighty three percent, the goal for the state is ninety three percent and we're not there yet, but we hound the students about getting to school everyday, we hound the students about getting to school on time.

Question 5.2 What procedures are in place concerning attendance?

Well if a student is absent five consecutive days, based on the districts initiative to clean up our attendance records, that student is removed from the rolls. Our attendance liaison continues to track that student however to see if they show up and if they're still out five additional days, they send out the legal warning to the parents about the number of days that the student missed and they may be subject to litigation, but uh, we uh basically the districts initiative is to clean up the rolls in order to improve our attendance instead of allowing these students names to just remain there over time and just accumulate absences. Uh, we do a lot of phone calling, uh letters, and I encourage teachers call when the student misses class. We have our secretaries who call we have para professionals assist with phone calls. Um, we run a tardy desk where we try to keep, make sure that anyone that comes in late gets a pass so we can document the tardy problem and work on those chronic tardy people, try to improve their punctuality and attendance, uh that's about it.